

The Campaign as a Tale – The usefulness of storytelling techniques in Marketing Communications Campaign Development

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**THE CAMPAIGN AS A TALE – THE USEFULNESS OF
STORYTELLING TECHNIQUES IN MARKETING
COMMUNICATIONS CAMPAIGN DEVELOPMENT**

BY

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A thesis submitted to the University of Bedfordshire, in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of MA by Research.

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To my English teacher

For all the essays and the sleepless nights.
For helping me develop an inquisitive mind.

ABSTRACT

Tapping into the consumer mindset is the quest of any marketer, and storytelling, one of the oldest forms of marketing communication is arguably a key source in understanding consumer behaviour and rationale at both a conscious and unconscious level. Whilst prior research acknowledges the persuasiveness of storytelling in advertising, the primary aim of this research was to identify key elements that help to create and nourish the relationship between the brand and the consumer, and to explore how storytelling techniques can become an integral part of the campaign planning and development process in order to improve overall efficiency. An in-depth interpretive study was conducted into the use of narrative and storytelling techniques in the context of contemporary branding and consumer psychology. Furthermore, data has been gathered on campaign development techniques employed by students at an undergraduate level, which was further corroborated by a survey carried out in an online environment. The study confirmed the overall acknowledgement of storytelling as a very effective communication tool, but one not viewed as an integral element in the planning and development process of a marketing communications campaign. Therefore, as part of this exploration, a tentative framework has been developed and conceptualised, adding storytelling narrative to the creative thought process, which is ultimately believed to improve the overall effectiveness of the campaign.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Storytelling is a beloved concept in marketers' minds; for consumers, it is an absoluteness in the prose of life. Powerful brands are powerful because they are protagonists in consumers' lives. Recent conversation in the marketing communications environment acknowledges storytelling as a necessary tool in developing a brand's identity and recognises it as being a differentiating factor (Bacon, 2013). Based upon the fundamental principles of embryonic semiology and classical storytelling, this study takes on a lateral approach to the formation of meaning and its implications for advertising and branding and storytelling will be looked at from two perspectives, i.e. the narrative and mythological stance. The primary impetus behind this investigation has been the work of Joseph Sasso (2008) who presented his research on *The Role of Helpers in Advertising: Bridging the Way from Semiotics to Storytelling* as part of the ESOMAR World Conference in 2008. The author's new method of analysing advertisements based on semiotics and contemporary mythology and storytelling has raised questions over its implications for consumer psychology. Whilst researching this topic, the seminal work of advertising practitioner Kent Wertime on *Building Brands and Believers* (2002) and his proposed image management framework, has further sparked an interest into how these variables can be built into marketing communications at a campaign planning and development level. This chapter serves as a brief overview of semiotic inquiries in advertising and introduces the primary aims and objectives of the study.

1.1. Symbols of Exchange

Numerous studies have been generated relating to what makes an advertising message effective and still relevant in an environment dominated by choice and

information overload (Garner, 2012; McLeod, 2011; Van Meurs, 2009, Chamblee *et al.*, 1993; Micu and Plummer, 2010), nevertheless in the words of one industry professional, “the basic motivations of people never really change [...] Human history pretty much boils down to the influence of love, hate, sex, greed, hunger and insecurity. If you want to write great advertising, always go back to the basics” (Stingley, as cited in D&AD The Copy Book, 2011, p.329). Going back to the bread and butter of deconstructing advertising messages, the most straightforward description of the relationship between a product and its value can be found in the words of economist and philosopher, Karl Marx (1857-61):

“The process, then, is simply this: The product becomes a commodity, i.e. a mere moment of exchange. The commodity is transformed into exchange value, it is exchanged for a symbol which represents it as exchange value as such. As such a symbolised exchange value, it can then in turn be exchanged in definite relations for every other commodity. Because the product becomes a commodity, and the commodity becomes an exchange value, it obtains, at first only in the head, a double existence. This doubling in the idea proceeds (and must proceed) to the point where the commodity appears double in exchange: as a natural product on one side, as exchange value on the other”

(Marx as cited in Williamson, 1978, p.11)

These symbols of exchange are by no means easy to decode though, and advertisers have turned to semiotics in their sensemaking quest (Williamson, 1978). From deconstructing and analysing the visual components of an ad to creating brand identities based on a matrix of signifying elements, the discipline of signs and the laws commanding them have been present in the advertising and

marketing communications industry since the 1960's, when it was viewed as a "suitable terrain for examining visual codes in terms of the relations between rhetoric and ideology" (Eco, as cited in Bianchi, 2011, p.247). In order to understand how these ideologies are created though, semioticians also analyse the socio-cultural context in which these are created, exploring it at a mythological level. Later studies of semiotics in advertising start investigating the audio-visual sphere, focusing on textual structures and sequences. More recent scholarly research has focused on investigating Transmedia Storytelling, i.e. brand stories told across multiple media (Scolari, 2009), nevertheless despite the general acknowledgement that storytelling creates a connection with the consumer at an emotional level, little has been discussed about the most effective ways of adopting narrative and storytelling techniques in the campaign planning and development process.

1.2. Aims and Objectives

This thesis adopts an interpretive approach to explore the intersection between semiotics, mythology and narratology and place these in the context of contemporary branding and consumer psychology (see Figure 1 below). According to Bianchi (2011), "a brand tells us various kinds of stories, thereby constructing possible worlds, in order to give substance and content to its basic concepts" (p.264). By utilising narrative techniques in telling stories about brands, brand managers are tapping into a more complex level of reaching consumers. Identifying a gap in the literature, Herman (2007) believes that the intricacies behind brand narratives is an area that needs to be explored further and according to him, "narrative scholars will need to explore the extent to which discursive-psychological concepts can be put in dialogue with other models for understanding

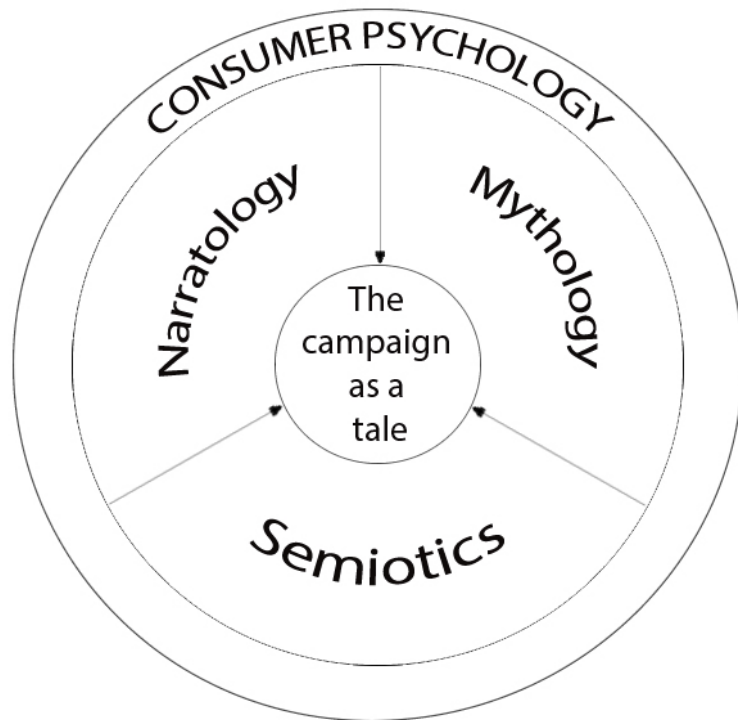


Figure 1 – The Intersection

the nexus between narrative and mind” (Herman, 2007, p.326). As a result, the primary aim of this research was to identify key elements that help to create and nourish the relationship between the brand and the consumer and to explore how storytelling techniques can become an integral part of the campaign planning and development process in order to improve overall efficiency. Amongst the main objectives were:

1. To delineate the relationship between classical narratology and brand storytelling;
2. To understand the construction of selected modern myths and symbols that are the result of sustained cultural interpretation and thus embedded in society;
3. To identify and nominate core elements that lead to the formation of effective brand narratives.

1.3. Research Approach and Structure of Thesis

As part of the research, an extensive literature review and an in-depth interpretive study were conducted into the current use of semiotics in advertising and brand storytelling techniques. Some of the mixed methods used at different stages in this study include semiotic research, textual and discourse analysis, ethnographic as well as netnographic analysis. The researcher used focus groups and questionnaires as data-gathering tools, on a student-based convenience sample, with the purpose of analysing the current techniques utilised by advertising and marketing communications students when planning and developing marketing communications campaigns as part of their course. The researcher chose to base the exploration in a student environment due to the belief that students are the next generation who will work in the advertising and marketing communications industry and therefore it is important to understand how they think and to explore what can be added to their formation. The researcher believed it would be more difficult to implement changes in the methods used by professionals who are currently populating the industry. Full details of the research approach and design can be found in the methodology chapter, followed by a discussion on the emerging themes. Here, a tentative framework has been conceptualised with the view that it should form part of the campaign development process. Ultimately it is believed that adding storytelling narrative to the thought process will improve the development process and the campaign itself. The paper ends with a conclusion summarising the findings of the study and their implications and further applications in the field.

2. A THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The aim of this chapter is to establish the relationship between the aforementioned fields of study, i.e. semiotics, narratology and mythology. The chapter is built as a discursive prose in which one section leads to another and the emergent themes are robustly tackled with a view to corroborating their role in this relationship. The discussion of storytelling as both an art form and the most common human practice also takes place in order to establish what are the key elements that ensured its pervasiveness through aeons.

2.1. The Semiotic Trigger

The arcana of semiotics can be traced back to the pre-Socratic era, when bodily signs (symptoms) have been identified as bearing meaning, not only at a physical, but also at a mental state (Mick, 1986). Despite its pervasiveness in the works of the great Greeks, the modern concept of semiotics has only been formulated towards the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century by Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1916) and American philosopher Charles Sanders Pierce (1867). The Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics (2003) suggests that *semiotics* is “the scientific study of the properties of signalling systems, whether natural or artificial” and “in its oldest sense, it refers to the study within philosophy of sign and symbol systems in general”. At the backbone of Saussure’s (1916) seminal studies lies the idea that a sign can be seen as a double-sided entity, composed of a *signifier* and a *signified*. In his studies on linguistics, Saussure (1916) describes the *signifier* as a simple physical manifestation of a sign, and the *signified* as the meaning or concept attributed to it. Moreover, what the Swiss linguist argues is that language cannot be seen as a mere collection of separate words

(units) each with a separate meaning, but instead it is the relationship and interactions between those words that forms the true meaning. As opposed to his contemporary, Charles Pierce (1867), who created a triadic theory of the sign based on more concrete interpretations made at a conscious level, Saussure (1916) focused on the metaphysical aspect of meaning production, believing that meaning is a cultural construction (Oswald, 2012; Cairns, 2010).

These fundamental aspects of Saussurean semiology have been translated at an extralinguistic level, and semiotic theories can now be found in numerous fields, from arts and architecture to advertising and branding. Inspired by the Saussurean paradigm, Claude Lévi-Strauss (1978) and Roland Barthes (1957) have drawn a parallel between language and culture and focused on the social aspect of semiotics, analysing less overt social conventions or constructs that have shaped society and are now passed as inherent and have formulated the concept of myths and mythology in popular culture. Whilst the former semiotician has discussed and developed frameworks for interpreting myths associated with human history and primitive thinking, the latter has focused on demystifying everyday aspects and values of society and the connotations behind them. Both the works of Lévi-Strauss (1978) and Barthes (1957) also quote the research of Russian folklorist Vladimir Propp (1928), who in his monograph *Morphology of the Folk Tale* (1928) has analysed the basic components of a set of 150 Russian folk tales so as to identify their most simple and irreducible narrative elements. Propp (1928) concluded that all the tales could be classified within seven *dramatis personae* - (1) the villain, (2) the donor, (3) the magical helper, (4) the princess and her father, (5) the dispatcher, (6) the hero, (7) the false hero; and thirty-one narrative functions necessary for the narrative to exist and which always occur in the same sequence (see Appendix 1). Lévi-Strauss (1978) adopts Propp's (1928) framework and uses it in his anthropological studies, concluding that in order to understand a culture and

its people, one should look for suchlike irreducible functions in their mythology and folk traditions and tales. Propp's (1928) *dramatis personae* will serve as a starting point in the conceptualisation of this thesis.

2.2. A Jungian Perspective

In advertising and entertainment media, this view also dubbed as being *structuralist*, has been researched by scholars and practitioners alike, who support the idea that consumer psychology draws from structuralism and that the study of mythic elements bridges the way between the consumer marketplace and consumer identity, ideologies and lifestyle (Thompson, 2004; Wertime, 2002; Woodside, 2010; Stern, 1995). Giving as an example the holiday market, Stern (1995, as cited in Thompson, 2004) shows how four universal mythic plots are used in advertisements and the stories told about its consumers – tragedy, irony, comedy, romance. Moreover, Thompson (2004) argues that consumer myths “focus on the archetypic characters (e.g. the good mother, the warrior) and story lines (e.g. heroic journeys, struggles between good and evil) that structure consumptions texts and the semiotic relationships through which mythic elements form a coherent whole” (p.162).

The idea of archetypic characters or *archetypes* is a basic concept in Jungian psychology. With a view to provide a conscious interpretation of his dreams and challenge his unconscious thoughts and feelings, Jung (1959) used visual narrative art to deconstruct their true meaning. At the backbone of this introspection lies the idea of a *collective unconscious* that drives behaviour and is comprised of *primal forces* or *archetypes*, which are best described in Jung's words below:

"The concept of the archetype, which is an indispensable correlate of the idea of the collective unconscious, indicates the existence of definite forms of the psyche which seem to be present always and everywhere."

(Jung, 1959, p.89)

In a more straightforward definition, *archetypes* represent "an inherited pattern of thought or symbolic image that is derived from the past collective experience of humanity and is present in the unconscious of the individual" (The American Heritage Medical Dictionary, 2007). The concept of *archetypes* has been explored in different disciplines through time, each using different terminologies to define them. In comparative religion archetypes are deemed *categories of imagination*, in mythology they are called *motifs* and the father of ethnography, Adolf Bastian (1895) used the terms *elementary* or *primordial ideas* or *thoughts* (Jung, 1959). Based on the aforementioned description given by Jung himself, archetypes represent a common denominator in human existence, which transcends boundaries and lies at the backbone of human nature itself. Moreover, due to their very positioning at an unconscious level, Jungian scholars also argue that the less archetypes are being recognised, the more impactful they are in triggering or shaping views and behaviour (Kardaun, 2010).

2.3. Archetypes and Fairy-tales

Stating that "there are as many archetypes as there are typical situations in life" (Jung, 1968, p.99) and that "endless repetition has engraved these experiences into our psychic constitution" (Jung, 1968, p.99), Jung acknowledges folk and fairy-tales as holders of raw archetypal material. According to him, "the whole of mythology could be seen as a sort of projection of the collective unconscious"

(Jung, 1968, p.152). For the purpose of this paper, fairy-tales as a genre will be defined according to the Aarne-Thompson tale type index (1910; 1928; 1961), the conventional classification system in folkloristics, in manifold cultures being found in tales consisting of recurring motifs in the following categories:

1.	A supernatural adversary
2.	A supernatural husband/wife
3.	A supernatural task
4.	A supernatural helper
5.	A magic object
6.	Supernatural power or knowledge
7.	Other supernatural motifs

Table 1 – Aarne-Thompson Tale Type Index (300-749), adapted from Propp, 1958

Nevertheless, a recent polemic between scholars around the origins and development of modern, universally acknowledged fairy-tales, challenges Jung's concept of a collective unconscious and archetypes derived from stories and his contemporary, Sigmund Freud (1913), who considered as well that fairy-tales express essential aspects of the human psyche (Haase, 2008). The revolutionary claim made by literary scholar Ruth Bottigheimer (2009), is that fairy-tales as a literary genre does not stem from oral, folk tradition, but are rather book-based and have been assembled from existing narrative elements rearranged in print (Bottigheimer, 2009). Referring mainly to one of the most popular types of fairy-tales, the *rise* tale, e.g. the Cinderella story, where "poverty through magic leads to marriage and then money" (Bottigheimer, 2009, p.21), she argues that all such-like fairy-tales can be attributed to *one* man responsible for spreading this new

industry of thought to a Europe with a “hungry folk imagination” (da Silva, 2010, p400).

Despite this view being highly criticised and dismissed by leading folklorists, the idea of an aforementioned ‘hungry folk imagination’ prevails unremittingly in this day and age, highly popularised through film and retold through advertising. The impact of fairy-tale archetypes over unconscious consumer reactions has been researched and proven in two experimental studies based in an academic environment and measuring *arousal* over a series of TV-commercials and films using the fairy-tale archetype and, similarly, contrasting them with commercials and films that do not follow this paradigm. The hypotheses of the study have been sustained, showing not only that the fairy-tale based commercial produced higher arousal than an informational spot produced by the same brand, but also that arousal is not simply influenced by a strong brand name or appealing product category (Gröppel-Klein *et al.*, 2006).

In an attempt to understand the notion of fairy-tales, Kardaun (2010) analyses the connotations behind the word *fairy-tale* itself in several different languages, concluding that the basic connotation is always ‘simple story’, which suggests that the charm of the tale also lies in its telling. Arguably, therefore, fairy-tales and folk-tales, one of the most elementary forms of storytelling art, create meaning both at an archetypal psychological level, and through their narrative sequence itself. This view is further sustained in modern consumer psychology, scholars concurring that “people think narratively rather than argumentatively or paradigmatically” (Weick, 1995; Wells, 1989, as cited in Woodside *et al.*, 2008, p.98), and metaphorically speaking humans are storytellers and listeners, i.e. *homo narrans* (Fisher, 1984). Aforementioned mythologist Roland Barthes (1957) as well, believed that “narrative is present in every age, in every place, in every society [...] it is simply

there, like life itself" (p.79). According to Huici (1993), people interpret the world through stories and myths, and therefore, approaching the reader or the listener through a medium that unconsciously falls into place is more effective in achieving persuasiveness than a message containing an often-avoided commercial appeal (Rubio-Hernández, 2011). With the advertising industry being dubbed as "the twentieth-century literature of the masses" (Hardt, 2004, p.23), and the belief that advertising and marketing professionals are "shapers of society" (Bernbach, as cited in Iezzi, 2010, p.35), marketers are charged with developing narratives that absorb and capture the audience's attention and are required to create excellent hooks of communication that break through and tackle the consumers' constant need to novelty, surprise and refresh in a fast-paced society consumed by information overload (Anderson, 2009).

2.3. Narrative Transportation

Therefore, in advertising and consumer psychology, researchers have begun to discuss the concept of *narrative transportation*, i.e. the state of immersion in a story and describe it as a "distinct mental process, an integrative melding of attention, imagery and feelings" (Green and Brook, 2000, as cited in Green and Clarke, 2013, p.478). Despite initial scepticism whether this concept can be successfully applied to advertising, more recent investigations have indicated that it can indeed have a persuasive effect on consumers. According to Phillips and McQuarrie (2010), "the greater the transportation into a story, the greater the belief that the assertions that make up the world within that story are true, because there will be less and less critical examinations of the ideas that inform that story world" (p.369).

The researchers have applied these theories to print ads in fashion advertising, showing how ad imagery, even on a standalone basis can provide intense narratives and achieve transportation. Providing as an example a Jimmy Choo print ad (see Figure 2 below), the authors describe the image as providing “all the elements needed to construct a plot and develop character”. Moreover, in Figure 3, Versace shows Madonna re-enacting an age old-myth, that of Eve and the original sin or Snow White and the stepmother. Despite the contradiction in possible value representation for the Versace brand, i.e. is it a brand for disobedient women or innocent victims, at a semiotic level, all elements of the ad, persuade the consumer to perform and engage in the narrative (Phillips and McQuarrie, 2010).

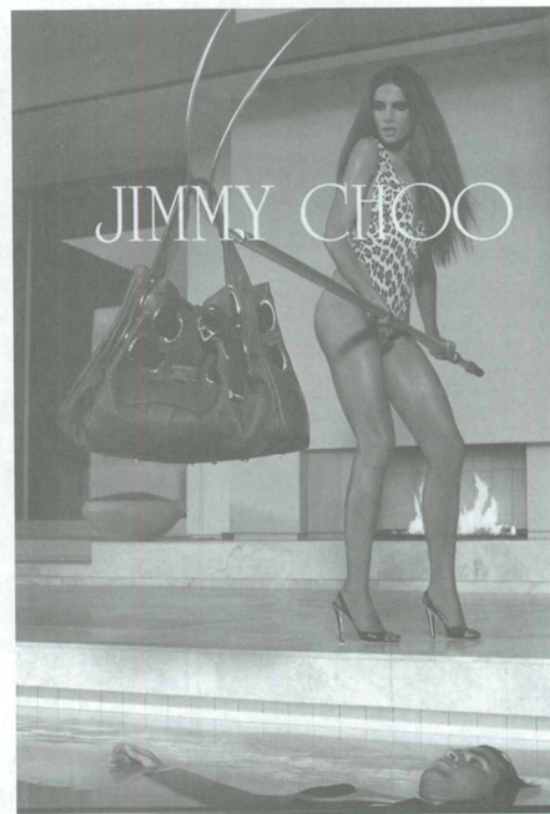


Figure 2 – Jimmy Choo Ad, 2007, reproduced from Philips and McQuarrie, 2010

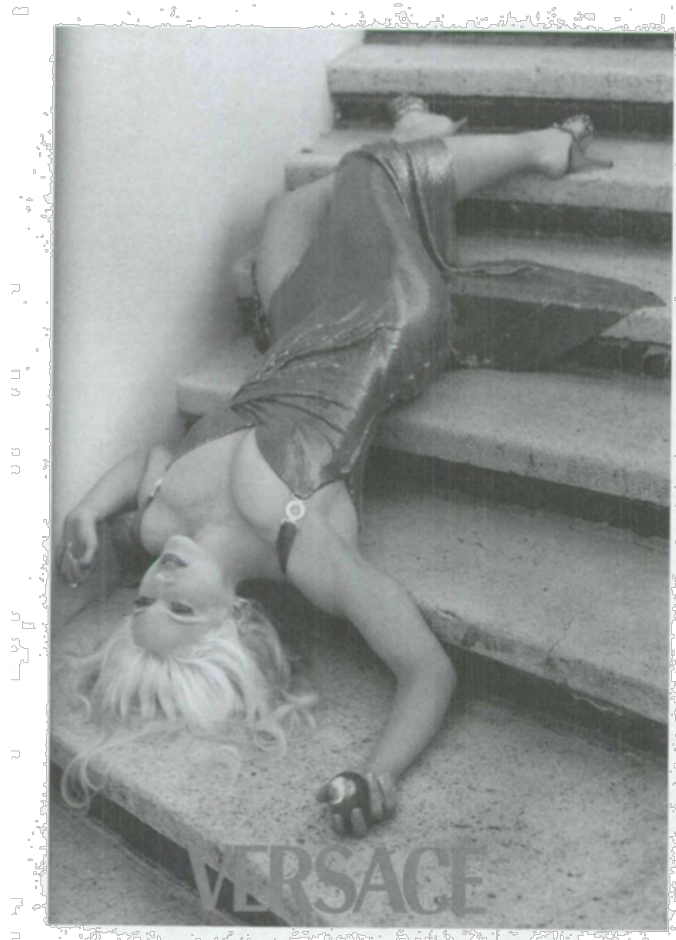


Figure 3 – Versace Ad, 1995, reproduced from Philips and McQuarrie, 2010

2.3.1. Freytag's Pyramid

Narratology as a discipline represents the science of the narrative, of examining stories and their structures and can be traced back to Propp's (1928) folkloristics and French structuralism. Nevertheless, the first studies on literary theory have their roots in Aristotle's *Poetics* (c. 330 BC), who discussed the elements that distinguish a story from a non-story and established that the *plot* is the most important component of a tragedy, even more so than the characters (Kwiat, 2008). Aristotle (c. 330 BC) believes that every plot must have a unified plot structure, i.e. a *beginning*, a *middle* and an *end* and has distinguished between simple and complex plots, believing that the latter category was superior due to increasing sophistication through complications and unravelling. These elements, he believed, would stimulate the audience and generate *catharsis*, i.e. "the sense of emotional

release and satisfaction that accompanies the resolution of a tragic action” (Bloomsbury Guide to Human Thought, 1993).

One of the most prominent theories for plot-analysis was proposed by German novelist Gustav Freytag (1863), whose work was inspired by the Aristotelian concepts. The author used Aristotle’s unified plot structure, which can arguably be found in any narrative form (Franz and Nischelwitzer, 2004) and developed a diagram to illustrate them (see Figure 4 below). The model proposed is based on five acts, i.e. *the exposition*, *the rising action*, *the climax*, *the falling action* and *the catastrophe*, or *dénouement*. The first act is an introduction, which presents the setting, the characters and the basic conflict. This is also the beginning of the inciting action, which occurs when the hero is set in motion. The rising action is when the conflict grows and progressive interest is generated. The climax of the drama is a turning point or an amplified scene where the situation changes. According to the author, “the poet needs to use all the splendor of poetry, all the dramatic skill of his art, in order to make vividly conspicuous this middle point of his artistic creation” (Freytag, 1863, p.128-129). During the falling action, the hero’s fortune is at its lowest point and the suspense is prolonged through the actions taken to overcome the climax. This culminates in the closing act, which brings a resolution to the journey. In the conceptualisation process of this thesis, Freytag’s (1863) model will be adapted and extended, and will serve as a skeleton for the model proposed.

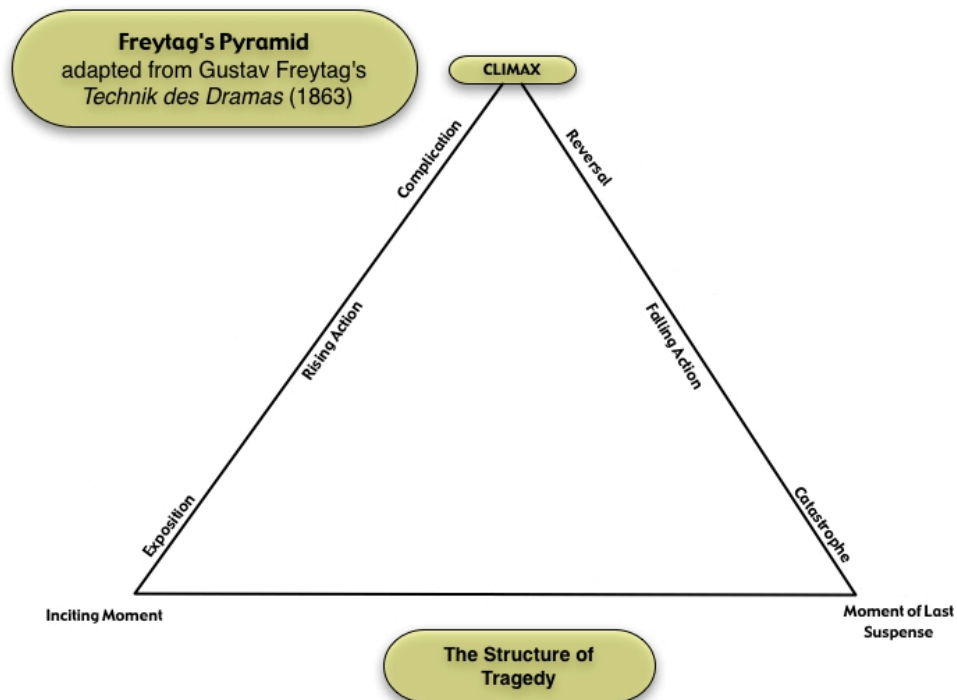


Figure 4 – Freytag's Pyramid (1863). Reproduced from Wheeler (2004).

2.3.2. The actantial model

Another useful tool in deconstructing narratives and following the hero's journey was introduced by semiotician Algirdas J. Greimas (1966), who proposed the actantial model based on Propp's (1928) theories, building a model for breaking narrative action down into six actants - (1) the Subject (or hero, e.g. the Prince), (2) the Object of Value (e.g. the rescued princess), (3) the Sender (who instigates the action, e.g. the King), (4) the Receiver (who benefits from the action – the subject, the object of value and the sender), the Helper (often magic, e.g. a magic sword) and the Opponent (anti-hero, e.g. the dragon) – and onto three axes, i.e. axis of desire (where the subject is directed towards an object and an aim, or a *junction* is

set), the axis of power (where a helper assists the subject in achieving the aim despite opposition) and the axis of transmission, or knowledge (where the receiver benefits from the quest). As cited in Bianchi (2011), "according to Greimas, every narrative has a priori, a goal, a task to perform, an object of value to attain" (p.256) and according to its originator, this actantial model can be theoretically used to deconstruct any real or fictional action. Moreover, Greimas (1966) speaks of three canonical trials essential in any hero's quest, i.e. the *qualifying*, the *decisive*, and the *glorifying* trial (see Figure 5 below).

In his methodology, market researcher Joseph Sassoon (2008) adopts Greimas' (1966) actantial model, showing that in advertising a brand or a product usually represents a Subject, an Object of Value, or a Helper. According to the researcher, "often the Helper represents a very relevant role for a brand or product to play" (2008, p. 2) and he believes that understanding and developing the Helper archetype can become a very effective tool in advertisements:

"For instance, often a young guy has no hope of winning the love of a girl unless he becomes 'qualified' by using a new fragrance (or after-shave, or toothpaste) and can defeat a dangerous rival with this magic help. (If the example is immediately recognizable it's because this outline has been adopted countless times in ads of every kind.)"

(Sassoon, 2008, p.3)

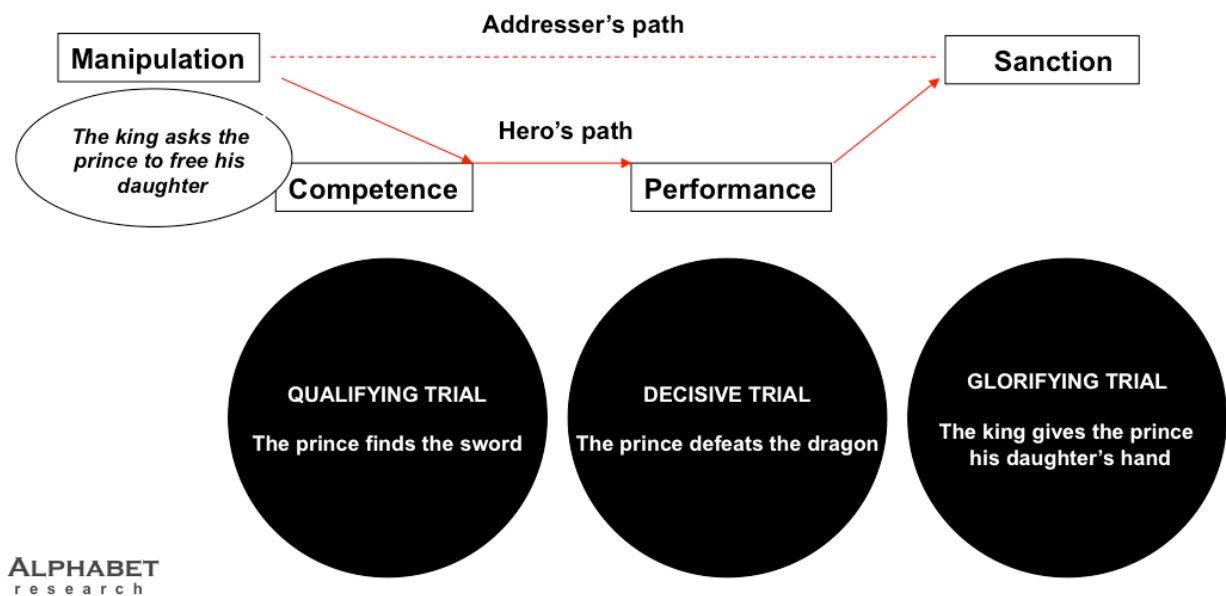


Figure 5 – Narrative Sequence. Reproduced from Sassoon (2009).

2.4. From Screenwriting to Transmedia Storytelling

In an attempt to explore the value of the myth and the Helper paradigm, Sassoon (2008) turns to American screenwriting and its film produces, arguably the best storytellers of our times. The author believes that the Hollywood industry has capitalised on these concepts and found an effective way of harnessing the power of the Helper archetype through various methods, such as giving them human characteristics or categorising them according to the nature of help they provide, whilst also constantly innovating them through new adaptations. Examples of helpers identified by Sassoon (2008) in contemporary advertising include magic food, magic elixirs, love potions, etc. The Hero's Journey, or the Monomyth (see Figure 6), is the template upon which most successful Hollywood stories are based upon. Introduced by mythologist Joseph Campbell (1949) in his book *A Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949), the philosophy of the monomyth represents a basic pattern found in manifold narratives around the world and has been adopted in screenwriting and the filmmaking industry, which have since thrived and achieved a mesmerising success.



Figure 6 – Stages of the Monomyth (Campbell, 1949). Reproduced from Busch *et al.*, 2013)

In his manual, *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Storytellers and Screenwriters* (1992), story consultant and screenwriting guru, Christopher Vogler (1992), analyses productions such as *Titanic* and *Star Wars*, showing a prescriptive model for screenwriting based on Campbell's (1949) structural framework and analysis of archetypic characters. Vogler (1992) acknowledges the fact that some contemporary cultures are still 'herophobic' in this day and age, and whilst he criticises Campbell's (1949) model for its 'happy-ending' truism, concludes that "from this model, infinite and highly varied copies can be produced, each resonating with the essential spirit of the form" (Vogler, 1992, as cited in Clayton, 2007, p. 211). Oscar-winner Andrew Staton (2012), writer-director of Pixar animated films such as *Toy Story* and *WALL-E*, also fundamentally based on

Campbell's monomyth, believes that storytelling has to make you care and that the audience must be engaged directly, co-creating and putting together the pieces of the story. According to him, some of the prerequisites of a great story are a strong theme and a constructed conflict - simple at the surface, but complex at a deeper level -, well drawn characters with a inner-motor, and a wonder-factor - people like to believe in wonders.

In marketing communications, practitioners have begun to recognise the importance of storytelling and narrative theories in creating and sustaining effective brand stories (Bacon, 2013). The new-fangled concept of Transmedia Storytelling (TS) refers to stories told across multiple media. According to Jenkins (2003), "each medium does what it does best – so that a story might be introduced in a film, expanded through television, novels, and comics, and its world might be explored and experienced through each play" (p.3). Transmedia Storytelling is not merely an adaptation from one media to another, but a multiplicity of modes is required to achieve narrative transportation in different media, and in the words of Jenkins (2006, as cited in Scolari, 2009) "create a narrative so large that it cannot be contained within a single medium" (p.589). Scolari (2009) gives as examples successful franchises, such as *Matrix* and *Harry Potter*, describing them as "heavyweight narrative brands that express themselves in different media, languages and business areas" (p.590) and believes that brands can similarly become narrative worlds by effectively telling and adapting their stories on a multi-media platform.

3. CREATING MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a scholarly background to the process of creating marketing communications. Developing marketing communications

strategies comes under the job description of most practitioners in the marketing field. According to textbook materials, this process starts with the alignment of marketing communications strategies within the overall marketing strategy of the organisation, which in turn must support the competitive business strategy and corporate philosophy of the brand. In order to build a marketing strategy, practitioners are first required to decide whether to *segment* the market or not and then to determine which area they will *target*. Once the segment is identified, the next step is to decide on the *positioning* of the product or brand, i.e. how it is going to be presented to customers within that market. In order to do so, it is crucial for marketers to understand the *audience*, their needs as well as their buying behaviour, media selection and how they respond to various messages. Deciding how to position a product or a brand also requires competitor analysis in order to help identify which are the key differentiators that set you apart from other players within that target market. According to Fill (2011), "marketing communications needs to engage target audiences so that they can understand what the brand means, how it differs from similar offerings and as a result position it clearly in their minds" (p.95). Three types of positioning can be identified in marketing communication strategy, i.e. pull-positioning (intended towards the end-user customers), push-positioning (intended towards trade buyers) and profile-positioning (intended towards a wide range of stakeholders, organisational-oriented).

Another crucial step in the development of marketing communications is to formulate and establish the objectives of the campaign. According to Fill (2011), objectives should have three constituents, the first one relating to the sales and profitability aspect, the second one relating to the communication impact of the campaign – achieve top of mind awareness, influence perception or attitudes etc., and the third one concerning the overall corporate aim of the organisation – image, reputation and performance amongst stakeholders. Once all these are set and the strategy defined, the planning process begins, which encompasses a sequence of

factors and actions that need to be undertaken in order to help build a robust campaign. In his textbook, Fill (2011) suggests a marketing communications planning framework (MCPF) to help illustrate this process (see Figure 7 below).

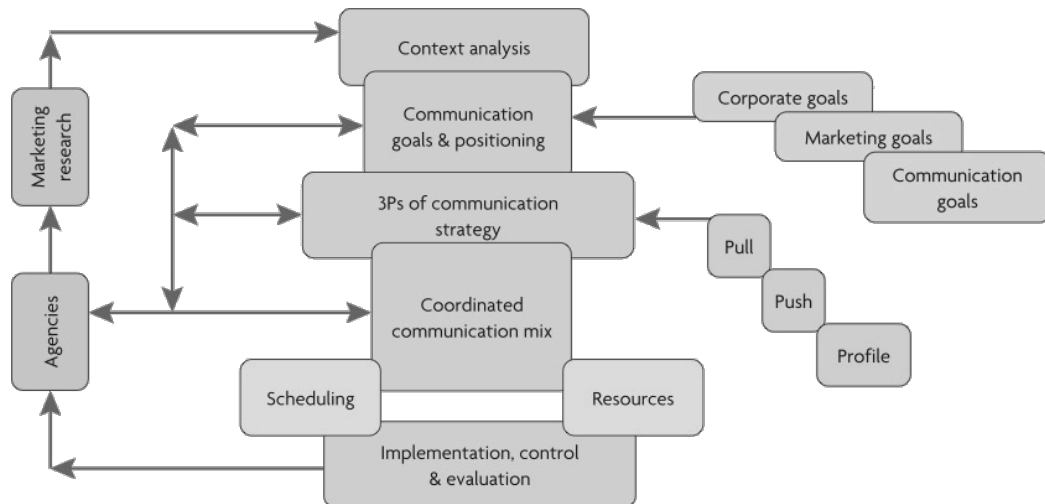


Figure 7 – Marketing communications planning framework. Reproduced from Fill (2011).

At the top of the checklist lies context analysis, a broad understanding of customers and the segment selected, as well as knowledge of internal, external and the overall business environment. This step is tantamount to the process of market research. As the objectives, strategy and positioning have already been defined, the next element of the marketing communications planning framework is the coordination of the communication mix, achieved in-house or externally, the latter requiring a briefing process. It is here where the decision is made as to which communication tools, content and media will be selected, and afterwards their scheduling and the resources attributed towards it. The last aspect of the framework is about the implementation and control of the campaign, essential in order evaluate its effectiveness and deliver the value sought.

The Marketing Communications Planning Framework nominates and combines all the elements required in order to develop a strategic marketing communications plan. The creative process though, builds on the insights gained during the earlier stages, but is starting to develop somewhere between strategy and the communications mix selection stage, when a message or a proposition must be developed that will connect with the target audience and then adapted and translated through various media and tools. With the concept of creativity hanging ubiquitously amongst academicians and professionals of the advertising and marketing communications industry, the question always emerged as to what creativity actually means. According to communications researcher Robert Smith (2000), creativity in advertising can be achieved at five different levels, from *originality*, or combining uniqueness with elements of rarity or surprise, to *flexibility*, the adaptability of a product to different uses or ideas in the advertisement, *elaboration*, i.e. the presentation of unexpected details that make the message much more complex, *synthesis*, or the depiction of unusual connections that are brought together in the advertisement, and last, but not least, *artistic value*, which is achieved through aesthetically appealing visual, verbal or sound elements. Whilst analysing a variety of advertisements, the researcher has concluded that the most effective in terms of sales impact came when two dimensions were brought together, and out of all possible combinations, the top one was combining elements of originality and elaboration in an advertisement (Werner and Saffert 2013).

An important aspect of marketing communications planning is the idea of integration, described by Fill (2011) as a “logical, sound approach to bring all elements associated with a marketing communications campaign together” (p.115). According to Kotler (2009), integration is a “concept of marketing communications planning that recognises the added value of a comprehensive plan. Such a plan evaluates the strategic roles of a variety of communication disciplines and combines

these disciplines to provide clarity, consistency and maximum impact through the seamless integration of messages” (as cited in Cox *et al.*, 2011, p. 2). In essence, integration is about constructing and delivering a consistent message or brand idea, uniformly translated and executed through various channels and at every touchpoint, or every interaction between the customer and the brand. In order to build a comprehensive story, rigorous planning has to take place in order to ensure integration at the campaign level, from orchestrating the tools of the marketing communications mix, to suffusing the message at an organisational level. Integration renders effectiveness at a synergistic level, the combined effect of a unified message exceeding the sum of its individual effects (Assael, 2011). According to Fill (2011), “in an age where consumers can touch brands across a range of channels it is important that each contact reinforces previous messages and facilitates the development of valued relationships” (p.136). Whilst a fully integrated approach is sometimes difficult to implement or manage, it is believed that in this day and age the concept of integration should be the ultimate aim and a requirement in marketing communications planning. Therefore, all the campaigns or approaches discussed as part of this study are looked at from an integrated standpoint.

4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

For the purpose of this paper, storytelling will be looked at from two perspectives, i.e. the narrative and the mythological stance. The following research questions are based on the insights gained during the study of previous research and literature in the field, which acknowledge the persuasiveness of storytelling in advertising. With an aim to identify the key elements that help to create and nourish the relationship between a brand and the consumer, and to explore how storytelling techniques can become an integral part of the campaign planning and development process in order

to improve overall efficiency, the methodology of the current study has been adapted to answer three emerging research questions:

R.Q.1. What are the current approaches in the development of integrated marketing communications campaigns employed by students in the field?

In order to reposition storytelling as an integral part in the campaign planning and development process so as to improve efficiency, the researcher needed to understand how the process currently works within the chosen sample. As aforementioned, a student sample was deemed relevant and as worth investigating due to the students being prepped as future marketers, though still at a formative stage in their professional development where new methods and techniques can be trialled and implemented.

R.Q.2. What is the nature and extent of storytelling in marketing communications?

The second question is closely linked to the first one, the researcher needing to investigate whether storytelling is a tool utilised by the participant sample in their marketing communications campaigns and how this is done.

R.Q.3. How do consumers interact with the storytelling element and how does advertising contribute to myth generation and preservation in modern society?

In order to understand how advertising and marketing communications helped shape the mythology of the modern society and to identify what are the key elements behind this, elements which could be conceptualised, the researcher chose to analyse selected brand myths and stories, which have been embedded in society e.g. Father Christmas in red rather than white.

5. METHODOLOGY

Whilst the previous chapters served to position the research more robustly, this chapter will now elaborate and outline the research methodology, which was employed in order to answer the three aforementioned research questions. The current research started off with a qualitative approach, a humanistic study exploring the intersection between semiotics, mythology and narratology and placing these in the context of contemporary branding and consumer psychology. Some of the mixed methods used at different stages in this qualitative study included semiotic research, textual and discourse analysis and ethnographic techniques. Nevertheless, in order to gain a broader breadth of vision and achieve a true triangulation design it was decided by the researcher that further data was required, and therefore the design of the thesis was extended to adopt a multi-method approach, data also being collected quantitatively via a questionnaire. Consequently, data was validated from multiple sources and from different methodological standpoints, as it will be seen in the results and discussions chapter, the advantage of this approach being that it yields a stronger and more consistent set of data (Brewer, 2005).

Overall, the research follows an interpretivist paradigm, purposely aiming to gain knowledge, understand and interpret meanings formed at a cultural level. This differs from the positivist philosophy, whose main purpose is to find universal laws and for which a single reality exists for various reasons. First and foremost, according to methodological literature, "interpretive research assumes that reality is socially constructed and the researcher becomes the vehicle by which this reality is revealed" (Cavana, Delahaye, and Sekaran, 2001; Walsham, 1995a, 1995b, as cited in Andrade, 2009, p.43). The interpretations made by the researchers, as well as the subjectivity, are arguably "backed with quality arguments rather than statistical exactness" (Garcia and Quek, 1997, as cited in Andrade, 2009, p.43). Moreover, interpretive

research is based on the concept of *relativism*, i.e. the view that reality is subjective, individually constructed and that meaning is not discovered, but constructed through the interaction between the researcher's consciousness and the world (Scotland, 2012).

Furthermore, interpretive research starts with a broad research question, in this case an exploration of the connection between several different areas of study and their application in a modern environment. Here, the theories proposed can only be grounded (inductive), i.e. generated from the insights and data gathered and interpreted, and not prior to it (Cohen *et al.*, 2007, as cited in Scotland, 2012). One of the main advantages of this approach is that it emphasizes the importance of the data in research enquiry, void of which a conceptually rich theory cannot be produced. The comprehension of qualitative research requires an intricate introspective and hermeneutic process to decode the data and discover meaning in a semiotic fashion. This process is best described as consisting of "iterative cycles of explanation and understanding, of text and context and of understanding of the 'other' and understanding of the self" (Prasad, 2012, p.79), thus facilitating sensemaking at manifold levels in the research.

5.1. Qualitative Methods

One of the main research methods that were originally planned for this study is ethnography, method often encountered in market research. According to The Sage Dictionary of Cultural Studies (2004), "ethnography is an empirical and theoretical approach inherited from anthropology whose central purpose is to generate detailed holistic descriptions and analysis of cultures based on intensive fieldwork." Exploratory in nature, ethnographic research is based on in-depth studies within that field, including participant observation, semi-structured interviews, record and note

keeping and is more often than not, an elongated process during which the researcher, or ethnographer takes on an introspective role and becomes part of the culture itself. Nevertheless, a realisation was soon made by the researcher that in the short confines of a MA and with limited resources, the ethnographic approach could not reach a high standard of execution. According to Boddy (2009), in these conditions ethnography can become a “research fad that over-promised on results” (p.2), and in order to yield valuable consumer insights and not disappoint, it requires a high level of commitment and expertise. With this in mind, the researcher tried to adapt the methodology and discovered that there is a difference between *doing ethnography*, *adopting ethnographic perspectives* and *using ethnographic research tools* (Green and Bloome 1997). Whilst the first refers to the aforementioned traditional in-depth study and open-ended engagement with a specific culture, adopting ethnographic perspectives refers to a more focused study on specific aspects of that culture, whereas using ethnographic research tools is merely using particular ethnographic methods, such as participant observation, with a more limited objective in mind.

For the purpose of this research, the last two types of ethnographic research are employed, i.e. adopting ethnographic perspectives and using ethnographic research tools. As part of the research, the ethnographer seeks insights into the way integrated marketing communications campaigns are planned at an academic level by partaking in discussions leading to the development process and therefore trying to understand the rationale behind the proposed communication tools. Interviews and participant observation are in this case mostly intermingled, and bear the form of focus groups. According to Suter (2000), “the focus group method provides access to participants’ interaction on topics that are either difficult to observe or rare in occurrence” (p.1), and also “like in-depth interviewing, they allow access to the

attitudes and experiences of our informants” (Morgan and Spanish, 1984, as cited in Suter, 2000, p.3).

5.1.1. Qualitative Research Sample

The aforementioned advantage of using focus groups as a data-gathering tool is of particular importance in the current research due to the fact that in both academic and professional environments, campaign development is more often than not a group process rather than one individual’s undertaking. A convenience sample was selected for two focus groups, which took place in February 2013. The sampling was mainly based on the convenience element, and could also be described as *opportunistic sampling*, i.e. not taken from the practitioners’ population at large, but rather from a convenient subset of it (Dictionary of Psychology, 2009). The sample consisted of 25 students (5 males and 20 females), from Level 3 undergraduate students following the ‘Marketing Communications Practice’ module as part of their course at the University of Bedfordshire, aged between 20-38 (mean age 22 years), which reflects the overall student population in this location and in this field. The participants had interacted prior to this study, insofar as some had been working together in groups to develop marketing communications campaigns as part of their coursework, hence creating a more real-life setting for the research. The participants were also asked to fill in a short questionnaire on the subject of communication effectiveness, thus adding to data triangulation from a practitioner’s stance.

5.1.2. Qualitative Research Procedure

During the planning stage, prior to the focus groups taking place, the researcher interacted with the course tutor in order to make the necessary arrangements, such as time, location and the group of participants that were going to attend. Moreover,

it was also discussed with the tutor how the task of creating marketing communications was approached, not only by the participants, but also from a teaching perspective, what tools or methods were being taught. Once all details were arranged, the researcher put together a short plan for the focus group sessions and drew up the consent forms for the participants.

The focus groups began with an icebreaker to stimulate interaction and set an informal tone for the discussion. This was important in order for the participants to understand that the focus group session was not part of their curriculum and would not impact on their evaluation, and also to reduce the risk of participants not expressing their views or giving socially desirable answers, because of the formality of the setting. The icebreaker consisted of asking the participants to state the first word that comes to their mind when five brand names are mentioned. The same brands have also been mentioned in the second questionnaire in order to add further insight and verification. For the first focus group, which was attended by 15 participants, the schedule adhered to was semi-structured, commencing with general questions on how the participants approach the task of creating an integrated marketing communications campaign based on a brief provided as part of their coursework. This was followed by an interactive exercise facilitating an enquiry into the main steps in campaign planning and development, as well as the main catalysts of advertising effectiveness and differentiation. All these have been discussed, agreed upon and recorded. Furthermore, the subject of storytelling was introduced at different stages in the sessions in order to reveal the participants' attitude and beliefs from both a consumer and prospective marketer stance.

Following the outcomes of the first focus group, the second one responded to trends in the data and it began with a more narrow approach examining character-building in advertising, the main components and their effectiveness. Only afterwards was

the focus of attention shifted towards campaign planning and effectiveness. Ten participants attended the second focus group. Each focus group session lasted approximately 45 minutes, was tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim by the researcher in order to become aware of emergent themes, i.e. research, creativity, emotional appeals, storytelling. In order to ensure objectivity, a second researcher went through the transcript separately, and identified the same themes. The focus groups and the discussions were conducted until the researcher decided that gathering further data was redundant and that theoretical saturation at that stage had been achieved. This was decided based on the discussion with the course tutor, who suggested that the two selected participant samples were the best to represent the overall population of students taking the course, and also because the researcher was confident that an adequate amount of data was gathered at that stage, which needed to first be analysed before proceeding further.

5.2. Quantitative Methods

Nevertheless, after an initial analysis of the data gathered during the focus groups, the researcher decided that in order to gain a broader breadth of vision, certain aspects that had emerged needed to be investigated further, but from a different stance. Thus, a questionnaire was devised, a convenience sample was chosen once again, the survey being carried in an easily accessible online environment. The questionnaire was designed on a platform owned by the Bristol University and made available for University of Bedfordshire researchers (www.survey.bris.ac.uk). The questionnaire was made of four sections (see Appendix 2). In section one, general information about the participants was gathered, whilst the second sections focused on establishing their relationship with fairytales and the superhero element. Despite a polemic in questionnaire design and best practices as to whether demographic and personal questions should be placed in the beginning or at the end of the

questionnaire, the researcher believed that in case the participants answered only half of the questionnaire, at least this information was captured and therefore chose this template from the platform used to create the survey. The third section introduced five brands, for which mind associations were being sought, whilst the final fourth section looked at the participants' favourite brands and advertising messages. All questions were designed with a view to help achieve and answer the three research questions. The questionnaire was made available for four weeks in September – October, 2013 and distributed mainly via social media sites, thus encouraging further contribution from the participants, from sharing the questionnaire with their audience, to expressing their views in further detail by directly messaging the researcher to discuss certain questions. As a result, the study has also taken a netnographic approach, helping to facilitate a better understanding of modern cybercultures and consumer behaviour in an online environment (Kozinets, 2012). The questionnaire had 70 responses, with a mean average of 24 years of age, out of which 43% were male respondents and 57% female, who pertained to 14 different cultures scattered globally.

5.3. Ethical Considerations

In order for the research to be validated ethically, consent has been taken in writing from participants in both the focus groups and online questionnaire (see Appendix 3). The participants have been given a brief outline of the study and asked to consent that their participation is voluntary and in the case of the focus groups, that the sessions will be tape-recorded and the data transcribed (see Appendix 4). It was also stipulated that the participants will not be personally identified in any way and they have the right to withdraw at any point from the study. Since the topic of the study is not highly sensitive, the level of distress or discomfort has been minimal, therefore no further safeguarding actions have been taken in that respect. Furthermore, the

research adheres to the ESOMAR code of conduct on market and social research, promoting self-regulation and high ethical standards. One of the main challenges for the researcher was to maintain reflexivity throughout the data collection period given the fact that she had studied the same course and modules as the participants of the focus groups. In order to do so, the researcher had to constantly take a step back to analyse her actions, and allowed subjectivity only when required in order to connect with the participant sample. This process worked adequately, and the discussions that took place flowed naturally.

5.4. Data analysis

Following transcription of the focus groups and extraction of the questionnaire data, the next step in the research process was to analyse the data gathered. In order to do so most effectively and maintain focus at all stages in the process, the concept of *data analysis* itself was studied. The word 'analysis', from the Greek, *analyein*, means 'to break up', or, according to Spiggle (1994) to "divide some complex whole into its constituent parts" (p.492). As researchers, we are charged with dissecting this complex whole, reducing it to the most minimal elements, to sort them and reconstitute or, in our own terms, to *interpret* them. *Interpretation* is the backbone of data analysis, if not the backbone, for sure one of the most delicate cervical vertebrae. There is no one interpretation for any notion, nor a single truth. Nonetheless, reliability, rigour and reflexivity in interpretation stem from transparency in the train of thought and triangulation of data.

5.4.1. Operations in Data Analysis

In her research on "Analysis and Interpretation of Qualitative Data in Consumer Research" (1994), Spiggle identifies seven operations used during different stages in

the data analysis. The first is *categorisation*, i.e. classifying or labelling certain recurring elements from the data. In order to do so, all data gathered and recorded as part of this study has been fully transcribed and thematically coded. Key words were highlighted, categorised and based on these the most recurring themes were set, i.e. research, creativity, emotional appeals, storytelling. The coding process, drawn from the co-founder of the “grounded theory” approach, Strauss (1987), started off broad, *open*, scrutinising the data in its entirety, with the aim to spark an enquiry. Once this was achieved, the process moved on to *axial coding*, focusing on one category at a time, analysing the conditions, interactions, and consequences between every finding within that category with the purpose of creating a coding paradigm. Furthermore, after studying each category thoroughly, the coding process reached the *selective* stage, described by Strauss (1987) as the stage when “the analyst delimits coding to only those codes that relate to the core codes in sufficiently significant ways as to be used in a parsimonious theory” (p.33). *Abstractisation*, the next operation in Spiggle’s (1994) theory, builds from this process of categorisation and starts taking place during the selective coding stage. As the scholar puts it:

“Abstract constructs encompass a number of more concrete instances found in the data that share certain common features. The theoretical significance of a construct springs from its relationship to other constructs or its connection to a broader gestalt¹ of an individual’s experience”.

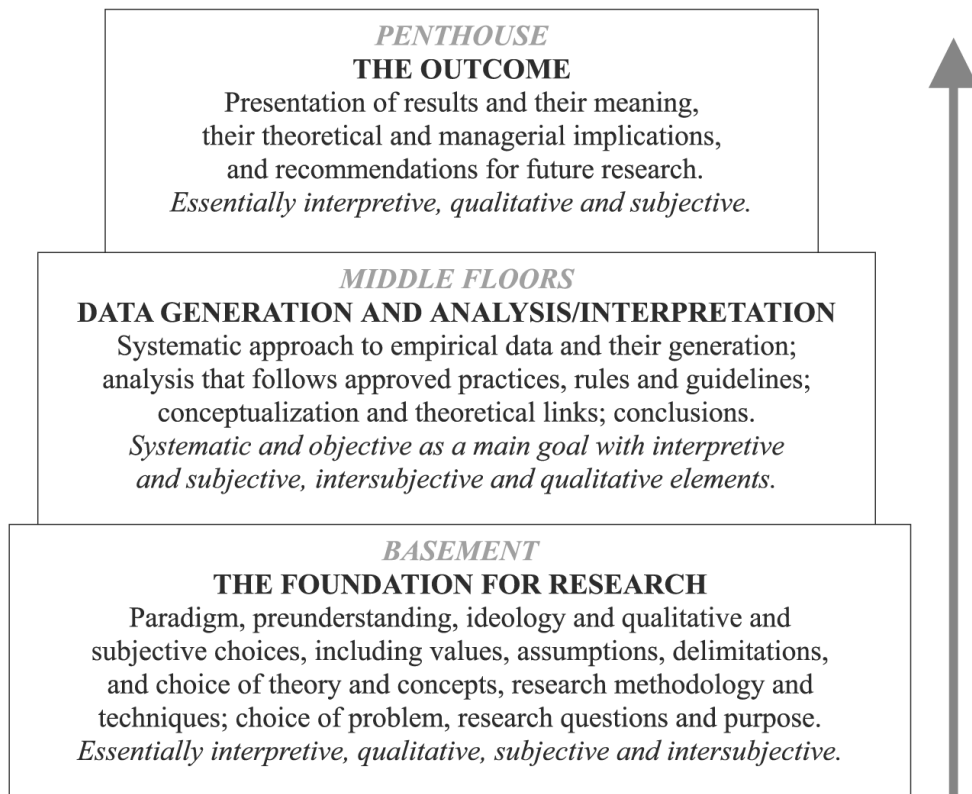
(Spiggle, 1994, p.493)

Following abstractisation, *comparison* is another one of Spiggle’s (1994) data manipulation operations. It is important to bear in mind though, that these operations do not occur subsequently or in an ordered fashion, but are used at

¹ **Gestalt** (gəshtält’) [Ger.,=form], “school of psychology that interprets phenomena as organized

various stages in data analysis. Comparisons occur in a logical fashion as one attempts to categorise the data, the only means of doing so being to explore and identify differences and similarities within that data. Another important aspect of comparison in data manipulation is the fact that it instigates the need for further data collection in certain categories or areas in which the differences or similarities need further maximisation. In the current study, this has been achieved through the usage of a mixed-methods approach and *triangulation of data*. Triangulation, as a data validation method, is more often than not equated with the mixed methods approach, i.e. combining qualitative and quantitative research. Whilst quantitative research gives the researcher breadth of vision, qualitative provides depth. Triangulation in this study occurs extensively, the data being captured not only through the focus groups, but also through the questionnaires, both of which have been analysed to identify the same phenomenon and validate the emerging themes. Analysing the quantitative data was a straightforward process. The platform used to host the survey also offered data analysis, giving the researcher the options to cross-tabulate results to see correlations in answers, to filter according to classification tabs, cross-reference the whole survey against a chosen question, create word clouds or load comparisons. Data was also exported and downloaded and colour coding was used to identify recurring themes or words.

Coming back to Spiggle's (1994) theory, the researcher also introduces the concept of *dimensionalisation*, i.e. identifying categories and constructs and interpreting them by placing them in a certain dimension, or context. Another variable emerges henceforth, more specifically, *integration*, which mainly occurs during the axial and selective data coding process. The author identifies a common malpractice here though, by arguing that "qualitative consumer researchers have sometimes stopped short of making conceptual leaps that result in an integrated structure, settling for identifying patterns, themes, or a few unrelated propositions" (Spiggle, 1994, p.495).



Source: Copyright: E. Gummesson (2003)

Figure 8 – The Research Edifice

In order to combat this, Spiggle (1994) also suggests the remaining two stages of the data manipulation process, i.e. *iteration* and *refutation*. Whilst the former refers to the interdependence and ongoing relationship between stages, the latter introduces a critical analysis stance, during which the concepts are empirically tested, which was the ultimate aim in this study.

5.4.2. The Research Edifice

In an attempt to bridge the way from the world of academia and that of practitioners, Gummesson (2003), argues that “all research is interpretive” (p.482), describing how regardless of types and contexts, whether academic or B2B research, quantitative or qualitative, all research follows the same paradigm, most specifically a ‘research edifice’ (see Figure 8 below).

Starting off with a specific foundation for research, the current study follows this pattern religiously, moving from a purposeful enquiry into the area of semiotics and storytelling, to a data generation stage that encourages theory generation, to a stage where it ultimately attempts to analyse and discuss their meaning and implications in a contemporary marketing communications field.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter combines findings from the different data sources gathered through qualitative and quantitative methods, and will provide an in-depth account of their origins and implications. The structure is based on the three research questions formulated earlier in the paper. The first sub-chapter looks into current approaches in the development of integrated marketing communications campaigns at a university level. The second one discusses the role of advertising in the generation of preservation of myths in society, whilst the third one presents a tentative framework, which adds storytelling to the campaign development process.

6.1. Approaches in the Development of IMC Campaigns

It should be noted that at the time when the focus groups took place, all the participants were in their third year of the Advertising and Marketing Communications bachelor's degree at the University of Bedfordshire, where as part of their course, they were working on developing integrated campaigns and messages based on client briefs. After a brief icebreaker, during which the participants were asked to name the first word that comes to mind when the researcher mentioned five different brands, the first interrogation made during the focus group one and mentioned at a later stage in focus group two, was how they

approach the task of creating an integrated marketing communications campaign. Following a previous discussion with the course tutor, the researcher had come across a framework, which had been developed to aid students in creating IMC campaigns based on given briefs (see Appendix 5). The following two have been identified as the main elements in their approach: *research* and *creativity*.

Participants agreed that their approach starts with looking into the background of the brand and market research would be the first step in developing a campaign. This was the case before and after the course framework was provided to them, framework which also features research as the first stage in campaign planning. Key factors mentioned here are *brand beliefs, values, company leaders, characters, and personalities*. Participants also agreed that looking into the target audience is also part of this process:

"You need to have a look at their buying behaviour as well, because there's no point of trying to sell nuts to someone who is allergic to nuts, because he or she would never buy them."

Other factors mentioned here include the customers' *"buying power"* and their *"price range"*. Also, one of the participants identified that:

"You need to find what your problem is before you start doing anything else, because if you're not sure what your problem is you can't really solve anything" and only then "what you want to achieve, the objectives".

On the other hand, another participant mentioned that despite having campaign briefs as part of their course, they did not have set objectives, and the focus was

more on the creative side of their work rather than anything else, which poses the question as to how an effective campaign can thence be developed.

Overall, a connection has been discovered between research, the creative process and brand differentiation. Participants concur that creativity is achieved and starts from the insights gained during the research process. In the words of one participant:

"You can't come up with an idea until you know all those things. So the research and the planning stage has to come before any real creativity takes part; you can be as creative as you like, but if it doesn't reach the customer, if you don't know your customer, it's pointless."

When the researcher asked how the participants come up with the creative idea, one participant answered:

"Ours was really through research."

Another participant gave a more in-depth answer and has associated this with the idea of differentiation as well:

"Look at their brand beliefs, values, kind of simple really, looking in-depth into the brand, what it represents, kind of start with that and then be consistent and let the creative kick in."

When asked how they would try to make a connection between the brand and the consumers, another participant said that:

"You have to have something that will relate to them, as there may be something that they enjoy or something they may aspire to, be, or have in their life. It depends really on what your target audience is."

Another participant adds to the idea by talking about Coke, family and the nostalgic feel. Other ideas mentioned include a mind-map of word associations with the brand, looking at the competition, previous campaigns showcasing the brand's *special characters* and *personalities*, whilst another participant states that:

"I think I consider the key points that you're trying to get across and that's normally given to you by the brand itself."

During the first focus groups, storytelling as a concept came about naturally in the discussion, before any question being asked by the researcher as to how it applies to marketing communications. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the concept was mentioned during the introductions to the focus groups and the brief outline of the research. When the question was asked whether it matters the way you communicate a message that you put together in order to achieve a goal, one of the participants responded that you have to:

"Think how you communicate the message in different ways; obviously it would mean different things for different people, so you'd have to adapt that message into, depending who you're trying to target really; like storytelling it works."

The other participants agreed immediately. Once storytelling was mentioned, the researcher asked for more opinions on the topic. The first words expressed were *great* and *fantastic*. Nevertheless, at the beginning there was a slight difference of

opinions whether the age of the brand is an influencing factor. On the one hand, one participant said that:

"You can only do it if you're an established brand generally, you don't really see someone who only started two years ago saying this is what we've done."

But then the same person went on to say that:

"But then, they do it differently; perhaps instead of basing storytelling on the brand, they base it around the customer, or the customer which they're trying to get."

Another participant then added that:

"I think storytelling is a good tool, I think even if the brand is recent they can still use a form of storytelling, maybe not much on history, because they haven't got that much history, but they can still have a form of story; I think it integrates a lot of things."

Once the concept of storytelling had settled it, the researcher went on to ask what the participants believe makes storytelling effective as a tool. The answer, as one participant put it, was that it is *"the feel it gives you, remembering"* and the other participants agreed.

Moreover, other ideas mentioned were *history, values* and *experience*, whilst another participant added that it is the timeline, *"the points you sort of connect emotionally with things in the ads"*, which makes it effective and another participant associated storytelling with *viral campaigns*. The discussion ended with one participant concluding that:

"Every brands needs a story, so that people can associate with it."

In advertising literature, whilst there are researchers who have found that in certain instances informational appeals were more effective than emotional ones (Aaker and Norris, 1982; Golden and Johnson 1983; Coulson 1989; Holbrook 1978; Stafford and Day, 1995, as cited in Panda *et al.*, 2013), the use of emotional triggers is a generally accepted practice in the field and numerous researchers have tried to prove its effectiveness and break it down into different facets depending on the type of sentiment provoked (Rossiter and Bellman, 2012; Bulbul *et al.*, 2010; Wang *et al.*, 2009, as cited in Panda *et al.*, 2013;). The findings of the current study confirm this perspective, the participants acknowledging the positive effect of emotional triggers in advertisements. In the contemporary environment, practitioners employ shock advertising, a strategy that builds on the dramatic factor, using it to "shock the emotions and make the brain itch" (Chaudhari, 2002, as cited in Panda *et al.*, 2013, p. 8). In general, shock tactics are based on messages that are unexpected and do not conform to social or moral norms, and according to Dahl *et al.* (2003), may even offend the audience, e.g. displays of vulgarity, profanity, or gratuitous violence, nevertheless it is believed the effectiveness of these advertisements comes from the surprise element, which engages the viewer at a cognitive level in their attempt to recover from the initial shock and try to grasp the actual message conveyed (as cited in Fill, 2011). Because of their outrageous nature and the fact that they generate conversations amongst consumers, the use of these tactics can help a campaign go viral and spread virulently (Fill, 2011). Overall, the findings of the current study suggest that applying and adapting this rationale to brand storytelling can thus improve not only the effectiveness, but also the scale of a communications campaign.

The participants of the second focus group also agreed that brand storytelling is an effective communication tool. Quoting John Lewis as an effective storyteller with their recent Christmas advert, one participant described that:

"You pay more attention to watching the story, it's not this brand flashing in your face, you're following something, like a journey from start to finish."

Overall the study suggests that *authenticity* and *subtleness* are two of the main characteristics that make storytelling an effective tool. During this focus group, the researcher attempted to find a link between storytelling and character building in advertising and to identify which characteristics make certain characters successful, e.g. the protagonist of the Old Spice campaigns. Factors such as *consistency*, *familiarity*, *likeability*, as well as *irritation* have been mentioned. In a discussion amongst participants, a clear distinction has been made as well between characters and the use of celebrity endorsement. Whilst participants agreed that the creation of a brand-specific character works well with children, e.g. Kellogg's Frosties and Tony the Tiger, when asked to give an example of how they worked on a given campaign as part of their course, one of the participants mentioned that:

"We definitely moved away from characters", but "we also did look at the storytelling, because we wanted it to connect with what UGG originally was."

The participant went on to explain how characters have a shelf life, and described it as a quick fix in a campaign. Other participants, on the other hand did admit the use of celebrities in their campaigns in order to embody roles models, whilst a different campaign used a character *"to represent normal men that we were aiming at"*. Despite these examples that show how characters or celebrities can be used as part of a campaign, no clear relationship was identified between storytelling and character

building. Whilst perceiving these concepts as two separate entities might seem like a normal perspective, the use of a character as a personification of a brand can be the start point for an incremental story following its journey as a brand advocate or hero and it can be adapted in various media and thus create an easily-recognisable and integrated message. Examples of this method will be given in the next section.

Moreover, during the discussion about the effectiveness of brand storytelling, the researcher asked how the participants made sure their concept engages with the consumer and whether they are looking into the consumer psychology and behaviour aspects. Here, one participant answered that:

"I think it's a process, I don't think that you initially go <<I'm going to tell a story about this>>."

The same person went on to describe how alongside research you will find the consumer insight that the entire campaign will be built around. The idea of a potential framework that could be developed to help achieve the communication objectives and deliver the brand values and differentiating factor sought was received well by the participants. Despite initial misperception as to how this framework would fit or expand their current one, the participants agreed that in order to develop an idea from a campaign brief of any given form, they would need as much guidance as possible on how to build the message and deliver it across various media channels: *"there's just bits where you want to know more"*, said one participant. Nevertheless, it was also mentioned that:

"There can be a framework, but you'd need to be careful [...] then it won't be as original because there will be a structure to follow."

According to another participant, an important aspect as well would be "*how you link that [message] back to your target audience*". In relation with the aforementioned marketing communications planning framework developed by Fill (2011), the overall findings of the focus groups suggest that students do start their approach in a similar fashion, with a broad context analysis, but nevertheless do not follow a general structure in their campaign planning and development approach. The conceptualised framework discussed during the third part of this chapter takes into account the aforementioned aspects and risks identified, and is built to address the gap in the field.

6.2. Perpetuating the Myth

In order to understand how the audience interacts with one of the most elementary forms of storytelling, the first question featured in the online survey after the demographic inquiries, was to describe what the participants' favourite tale fairy-tale or folk-tale. The 'child' variable has been assigned to this inquiry deliberately. Storytelling is an integral part of children's development and lives. According to psychologists and educational theorists, immersing into the world of folklore helps children learn about cultures and values. As described by the California State Department of Education (1987), "By reading the stories, children can enjoy the puzzles of good and evil, fear and courage, wisdom and folly, fortune and misfortune, cruelty and kindness. The tales help readers and listeners to explain the world and to bridge its confusing dimensions" (as cited in Geisler, 1997, p.32). Moreover, according to Bettelheim (1991), "fairy tales became ever more refined, they came to convey at the same time overt and covert meanings – came to speak simultaneously to all levels of the human personality, communicating in a manner which reaches the uneducated mind of the child as well as that of the sophisticated adult" (p.5-6). With this in mind, the researcher made an attempt to understand how

the participants perceive the most preferred tales from their childhood, looking firstly at how they describe them, the style, the sentiment and the choice of words. From the 70 responses gathered, 51% of participants chose to merely state the name of their favourite tale, or to translate it if originally pertaining to a different language or culture and only 4% stated that they do not have a favourite one. Nevertheless, 44% of participants went deeper into detail to describe it.

Out of these, 58% used short descriptions (<30 words); 56% only provided a very simple account of the tale, mainly describing the plot in few words, e.g.:

"Cinderella, the poor girl who is swept away by the beautiful prince and they live happily ever after in his castle."

"Daedalus and Icarus. The one where Icarus has wings but he flies too close to the sun and the wings melt."

Or describing other general reason for linking it, e.g.:

"My favourite folk tale is 101 Dalmatians because I like dogs very much", "I really enjoyed The Three Little Pigs as a child. I remember reading it many times."

8% though, of those who used short descriptions, gave more insightful answers, either identifying themselves with the characters, e.g.:

"Peter Pan. Mostly because it is about kids who never wanted to grow old just as I was thinking when I was their age."

Or providing their critical evaluation of the plot and moral of the story, e.g.:

"White Cloak a young unexperienced kid goes into a dangerous journey making powerful friends but facing a very smart villain."

The third type focuses on the attractiveness of the supernatural element, e.g.:

"Father Christmas – The thought of a magical being, able to fly around the world in one night and deliver presents to all the children around the world."

26% of respondents used medium-length descriptions (between 30 – 60 words), using the extra words to elaborate on their critical appraisal, e.g.:

"Harap-Alb - journey of self discovery, with a lot of advice, showing that in life you need friends, guides and help of all kinds; an overall win for the good side. It focuses on a myriad of good beings, not just one hero."

"Peter Pan It's about a boy who lives in Neverland, a place far from the usual and mundane life from the rest of the world. He never grows up and this is particularly why I enjoy this fairytale. Peter is always joyful and his life is full of adventures."

Furthermore, 16% of respondents used rather elongated descriptions, between 80 to 253 words to recount their favourite folk or fairy-tales. In a very meticulous description, one respondent answered:

"Doi feti cu stea in frunte - Ioan Slavici. The story is about 2 twin brothers, born from a peasant woman and a prince, that get caught in a twisted plot put together by the prince's stepmother and step sister. The two evil women decide

to get rid of the 2 children in their attempt to the royal power, but fail in their plan and get what they deserve in the end. The two children go through a long metamorphosis (from children to trees, from trees to beds, from beds to ashes, ashes to lambs, lambs to fish, from fish back to children) as the two women try to erase the evidence of their existence. Every time they try to destroy the twins, they take a new form and find their way back to their father. When they assume their final shape - the golden fish - they are caught and helped to turn back to their human form by a fisherman, who then raises them as children. When they become old enough, they decide to go back to their father in their human form and reveal the plot of the two evil women. After fighting their way into the court, they manage to meet with the prince and confront the women. They tell the story of their metamorphosis and their father immediately accepts them as his children and punishes the evil-doing women. In the end the twins are reunited with their father and the stepmother and sister are given the punishment they deserve.”

In talking about the process of *metamorphosis*, the respondent is describing a natural biological process and uses it as a metaphor to interpret the story and deconstruct the plot in an intricate fashion. The elaborate answer that the respondent put together denotes an even higher level of engagement with the story, and thus an even higher level of impact that the story had on the respondent, which still resonates in their adulthood.

As an adjacent question to the one asking to describe their favourite folk or fairy-tale, the participants in the study were then asked to select from a given list the three main reasons behind their choice. The list was based on Aristotle's (c. 330 BC) plot theories, who distinguished between simple, and complex or intense plots, as well as Bettelheim's (1991) theories about fairy tales, who believed that they are a

means of transmitting morals, real-life lessons or role models to children at an unconscious level. Figure 9 below is a representation of the results.

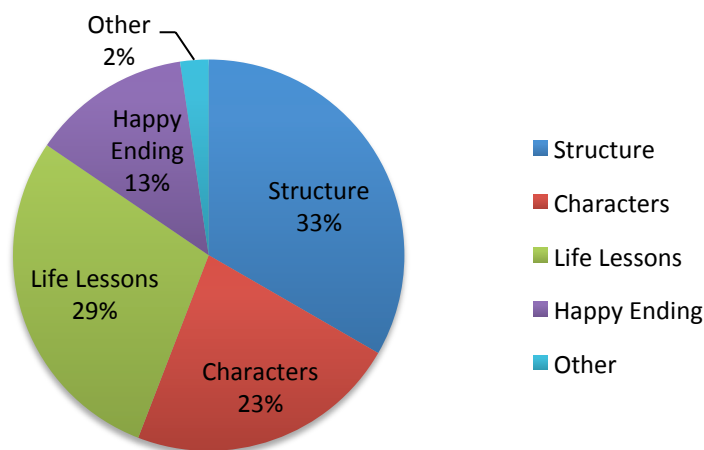


Figure 9 – Reasons behind favourite folk or fairy-tale selection

As it can be seen from the chart, the list put together by the researcher contained aspects from several different categories. The first one focused on the structure of the story, i.e. plot, narrative, storyline; the second one on the character element, whilst the third one referred to the lessons and applicability in real life. The happy-ending element has been singled out as a different category, and the researcher also gave the option for the respondents to choose other aspects than the ones on the list. The results show that the overall structure of the tale and its storyline was one of the most influential factors in their selection, confirming the fact that in their interaction with storytelling, the plot and narrative structure play a fundamental role. The results of the second category are not far off from the first set of answers, indicating the fact that the morals or lessons taught by a story and its applicability in real life situations are also a decisive element in the creation of a robust story that differentiates it from others. Furthermore, the characters themselves and the dynamics between them represent the third category, again in close proximity to the second one, suggesting the idea that well-built characters and genuine interactions

between them help to create a connection with the respondents. The happy-ending element plays a peripheral role in this selection, but nevertheless shows that a certain level of romanticism is still prevalent in this day and age, the readers or listeners sympathising and sharing the happiness with the characters that they interact with. The fifth category only accounts for 2% of responses, amongst other factors mentioned being that the story was "*believable*", or that it depicted life through "*fantastic magic things*".

The concepts of the *fantastic* and the *supernatural* lie at the very core of age-old fairy-tales. Moreover, superheroes and supervillains have been highly popularised in stories of the contemporary world, their mere success and ubiquity proving that the mass society needs them. In order to understand the relationship between the participants in the study and heroic or villainous archetypes, the next question was to select their favourite superhero or supervillain and to state in a few words the main reason behind their selection. Several different characters were singled out, from Hercules to Spiderman, or Xena to Wonder Woman, yet the interesting finding was in the second part of the question. The results showed that the majority of participants, i.e. 61% of them made their selection based on the human style and real-life attributes of the superheroes or supervillains, whilst only 10% choose them because of their actual supernatural capabilities. Answers include:

"A strong woman like me."

"He is a well written character that is smart but not physically powerful, making him relatable."

"Sometimes I feel like him."

"His weakness is realistic"

7% of participants stated that they do not have a personal favourite, whilst 14% of them gave general answers, such as:

"I grew up watching it and it was the best."

"If you know who he is, you will know why."

Overall the results show that the most preferred characters are the ones that the respondents relate to, share characteristics and would represent their ideal selves, which complements the earlier findings of the focus groups, when the participants agreed to the relate-ability factor.

As mentioned previously in the account of the qualitative research procedures, the two focus groups began with a short icebreaker, specifically created for this target audience and trying to get the conversation started. The researcher asked the participants to say the first word that comes to mind when the names of five brands were mentioned, i.e. Red Bull, Lynx (also known as Axe), Harley Davidson, Nike and Mr Clean. These brands were selected based on previous theories of myth-creation in advertising and branding (Sassoon, 2008; Wertime, 2002), these brands being amongst the most recognisable ones scrutinised by the researchers, whose models were used and adapted as part of this research. The exercise was used in the preliminary stages of the research in order to test these theories, which were later supported by the findings of the quantitative data, these respondents being asked as well to record the first word that comes to their mind when thinking of the following set of brands: Red Bull, Lynx/Axe, Harley Davidson, Nike and Coca-Cola (in the initial ice breaker, the fifth brand on the list was Mr Clean, translated and marketed differently in various cultures, in UK as *Flash*, nevertheless not all participants were familiar with it; as a result, the researcher chose to replace the fifth brand with the

universal Coca-Cola). Below is an account of the findings on each brand, in combination with an analysis of the mythic elements behind them.

The rationale for choosing Red Bull was based on Sassoon's (2008) description of the *helper archetype* used in advertising. Whilst the researcher used Gatorade to epitomise the magic elixir that enables extraordinary performances and has wondrous properties (2008), for the purpose of this exercise, Redbull was selected to represent the same category. The prominent "Red Bull gives you wings" advertising slogan which can be traced back to the company's very early years, i.e. 1984 (Torok and Holper, 2008), is a metaphorical portrayal of the helper archetype, enabling the person who drinks it to develop boost and energy of almost supernatural intensity, thus giving them the strength, confidence and ability to tackle and complete any challenge or task. Perpetually throughout the years, the company has added to this myth and pioneered what could be referred to as *adrenaline marketing*, creating stories around projects and stunts designed to shock the audience, break records and create buzz in the media (McDonald, 2011). According to Mortimer (2012), Red Bull took the idea "far beyond the product itself and translated it across almost every hipster lifestyle possible" (p.3). The results of the current online questionnaire designed for the purpose of this thesis show the fact that the most prominent answer of the first word that comes to mind when the brand Red Bull is mentioned is still *wings* (21 out of 70 respondents; moreover, 5 more respondents used the words *fly* or *flying*, thus increasing the percentage of the answers pertaining to this particular lexical field to 37%). The second most prominent word used more than once was *energy* (including *energiser* - 15 out of 70 respondents), with the remaining answers referring to alcohol, caffeine etc. The present findings confirm that the company's coherent positioning throughout the years has been successfully inscribed into the minds of consumers and prove that Red Bull's magic elixir myth is still present in this day and age.

Lynx, also known as Axe in most European countries, was the second brand listed in the word associations game. Since its launch in the UK market in 1985, Lynx has positioned themselves as helping men in the mating game (Dowdy, 2011), successfully embodying another helper archetype identified by Sassoon (2008), i.e. the magic love potion. The brand's communication strategy is based around the idea "use Lynx and get the girl" (Goldstein, 2001, p.2), their male grooming products being positioned as a tool to seduce women. Consistently throughout the years, Lynx has communicated this message and has become the leading male deodorant brand in the European market, especially popular in the young men segment (Jones *et al.*, 2012). In one of the most successful campaigns launched in 2011, Lynx re-enacted the biblical myth of Lucifer, portraying seduced female angels being drawn and falling from the heavens, thus showing that there is no woman that would not fall for their seductive fragrance (Dowdy, 2011). According to the results of the current study, 14% of respondents associate the name of the brand with its *smell*, whilst 13% associate it with the *male* gender (it is important to remember here the demographics of the sample, i.e. 57% female and 43% male). Nevertheless, an equal 13% of respondents chose the word *women* (or girls) as the first one that came to their mind, but in addition, the aforementioned concept of *angels* was also mentioned, thus increasing the percentage of the female reference to the highest of 16%. Furthermore, an extra 9% of responses pertained to the *sex* theme, words such as *sex*, *sexy*, *pheromones* or *attraction*, being used to describe the brand. The remaining answers were varied, from *aftershave* to *teenagers* etc., however as it can be seen from the above, the highest percentage of respondents associates the brand with its fragrance and the attractiveness to the opposite sex, showing that the magic potion myth has been conveyed successfully and that Lynx is still largely perceived in terms of its magical properties.

The third brand analysed in terms of its archetypal connotations was the motorcycle brand, Harley-Davidson. Below is a graphical representation of the answers, giving greater prominence to the words that were used most frequently by the respondents:

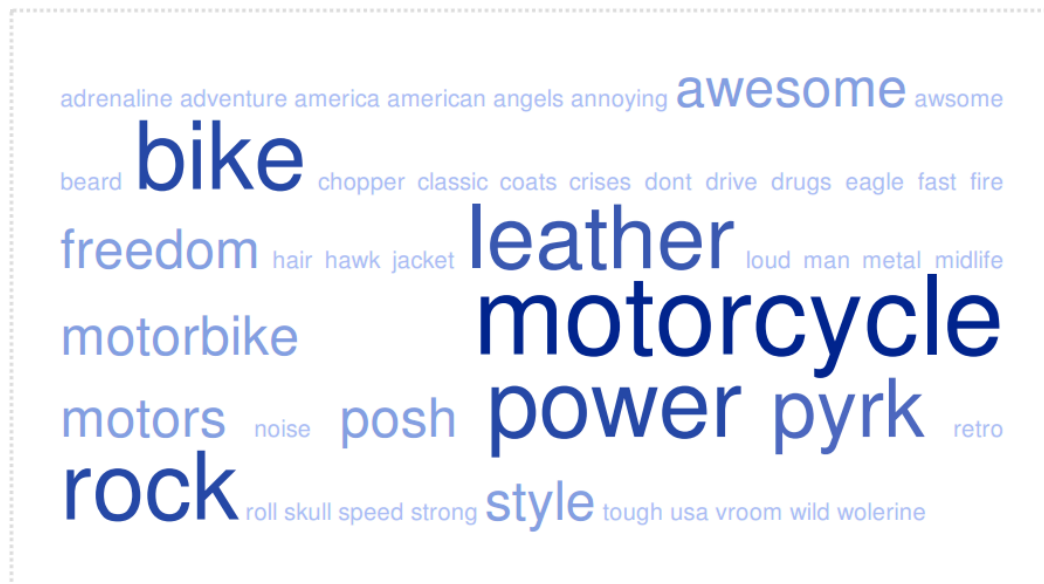


Figure 10 – Harley-Davidson word associations

A clear thematic is easily identifiable from the representation above. The respondents perceive the brand as an epitome of rebellion and power. The leather connotation evokes the Greaser culture of the 1950s and 1960s, when young men rebelled against the governing laws of their society, and chose to express it through their clothes and style. The leather jackets became a fashion statement, suggesting darkness, power and danger (Schenke, 2008). Referring to these 1960s male archetypes, fashion designer Daisuke Obana (2011) declares that, “if you’re a guy, you should be interested in something bad” (as cited in Van Meter, 2011, p.2). Harley-Davidsons is a very male-oriented brand, and according to Hutchins (2007), the Harley-Davidson rider “rode the motorcycle and lived the lifestyle” (p.3). In his book on *Building Brands and Believers*, Wertime (2002) defines the brand in terms of the Anti-Hero archetype. The researcher suggests that “Harley has tapped into a

strong consumer desire to express an alternative side to their personality” (p.122) and that “this figure represents another facet of attraction that comes from the depths of our psyches” (p.123). The results of the questionnaire are consistent with this thematic, showing that the ‘bad boy’ Anti-Hero myth has prevailed in the market through the Harley-Davidson brand.

Nike was the fourth brand to be put under scrutiny as part of this process. Universally recognised through their unique “swoosh” logo and the “Just Do It” mantra, Nike’s positioning is based around the idea of bringing out the athlete in every individual and according to Kilambi *et al* (2013), makes “as an appeal for consumers to take on the challenge of achieving their personal best” (p.7). In order to convey this, one of the main strategies in their marketing communications has been the endorsement of athletes, the ‘hero archetype’ being the backbone of Nike’s rhetoric (Bautista, 2008). Nevertheless, the results of the online questionnaire do not seem to confirm this myth. The highest numbers of respondents, i.e. 60% perceive the brand only in terms of product functions and features, associating it either with the mere idea of *trainers*, or that of *sports*, either in general, or more specific e.g. football, tennis, running. Only 7% of respondents perceived the brand in terms of its inspirational connotations, using words such as *performance*, *motivation* or *ambition*, with an extra 7% quoting the actual “Just Do It” slogan. Amongst the remaining answers 4% were negative, and the others general answers e.g. *ok*, *Adidas*, *want* etc. One of the reasons perhaps why the myth was not confirmed with this participant sample is because of its multiculturalism and Nike’s mythology not being communicated as robustly in different cultures. A further analysis would be required in order to demonstrate this.

Last but not least, when asked to record the first word that comes to mind when mentioning Coca-Cola, 19% of respondents attributed negative connotations to the

brand, nevertheless out of the remaining 81%, the most recurrent words used by the respondents were *Christmas* (12%) and *red* (14%). Adding to the Christmas semantic field, the word *Santa* was also used more than once, and *happiness* was also associated with the brand, reinforcing the idea of an emotional connection that Coca-Cola establishes with the consumer, as cited by participants in the focus groups as well. The Santa Claus myth is one of the most powerful and culturally recognisable legends that have been embedded in modern society. Originally based upon the Christian figure of St Nicholas, a patron saint of children characterised by his acts of benevolence, giving to the poor and ability to perform miracles, a modern adage holds that the current image of Santa Claus (also known as Santa or Father Christmas) was shaped and disseminated by Coca-Cola. Back in the 1920s, Coca-Cola was faced with the challenge to increase sales during the winter season, and thus commissioned Haddon Sundblom, a well-known artist at the time, to create the artwork for their new advertising campaign. The artist replaced the historical white version of St Nicholas (see Figure 11) with the image of a plump, jolly old man in a red cola-coloured outfit, with twinkling eyes and rosy cheeks (see Figure 12), an image which would remain vivid and unchanged ever since (Vann and Zimmer, 2008; Ritson, 2003). Wertime (2002) avers that “modern mythology doesn’t just use symbols, it also manufactures them” (p.79), and Coca-Cola has successfully done so by reinventing and promulgating a myth that still resonates and creates an emotional connection with modern consumers, as supported by the findings of the current study as well.



Figure 11 – Santa's visit to a kindergarten, Opole, Poland, the 1970s, reproduced from Haładewicz-Grzelak, 2011



Figure 12 – *Santa Relaxing*, Coca-Cola advertisement, 1958, reproduced from Vann and Zimmer, 2008)

In the last section of the questionnaire, the participants were asked to state which were their three most favourite brands and why. 21% of respondents merely stated their brands of choice, and 39% of respondents chose so because of their product features, e.g. *"good prices, good food"*, *"tastes good!"*, *"trendy and nice clothing"*. However, for the remainder of 41% the choice was based on other aspects rather than just product features, the respondents buying into the brand story as a whole, being won over by its marketing communications and positioning, or because it makes a connection with them at an emotional level, mostly bringing up memories. Amongst the answers include, *"Lego – reminds me of how life once was and how we want it all back, but are too ashamed to ask"*; *"Apple – because it feels everlasting"*, *"Toyota – the memory of the first car"*; *"Ikea – simplicity and comfort"*. One particular respondent contacted the researcher personally to discuss this particular question. Few minutes after the respondent had filled in the questionnaire, he started having more brands in mind that he associated with, starting to state more reasons why and believing some are more powerful than the ones he initially stated. When the participants were asked if they engaged with these brands on social media, 60% of respondents stated that they don't, whilst 40% did engage with more than one of their favourite three brands. This is an area that could be investigated further.

Lastly, when asked to state what was their favourite TV advert of all times, 14% of respondents stated they do not watch TV or they do not have a favourite one, however the remainder of them had one or more favourite ads in mind. Amongst the three main reasons identified through the responses was the nostalgia aspect, e.g. *"it stroke a cord, what can I say"*, *"remind me of family and good old times"*, the powerful message and the story put across, e.g. *"inspires me to achieve much more"*, *"the way in which the plot of the story is built leaves you in suspense until the end; the summary is clear and sells the most advertised emotion – love, chocolate with love"* or the humour aspect, e.g. *"funny, unexpected, sticks in your head"*.

6.3. The Campaign as a Tale

Based on the extensive study of the literature, it becomes apparent that the use of mythological and storytelling techniques in advertising is a powerful and effective communication tool, which drives consumer behaviour and taps into their psychology. Whilst this fact is also corroborated by the insights gathered during the current study, i.e. the emotional aspects of storytelling, the brand and consumer myths that are still present in this day and age, etc., the research suggested that storytelling, despite its effectiveness, is not viewed as an integral element in the actual campaign planning and development process. The research also suggested that whilst a new framework could be developed to include storytelling at a certain stage within the process, the risk of standardising this process would actually decrease its effectiveness and reduce its creativity.

With these in mind however, the idea of a creative exercise was produced, one which uses storytelling and proposes a narrative train of thought in the development of marketing communications campaign (see Figure 13 – The Campaign as a Tale). Similar to teachers using storytelling as a pedagogical tool, this lateral approach in campaign development is believed to encourage those who trial it to play imaginatively, to bring out morals and personalities, and thus enliven the product or brand. The framework is built on Freytag's (1863) technique of the drama to ensure a robust narrative backbone and the actants or archetypical characters drawn from Propp's (1928) *Morphology of the Folktale*. According to Cordiner (2009), in the current information-led economy, "we're left with brands that make sense, but fail to connect" (p.1); The Campaign as a Tale is a model that makes an attempt at tackling this issue and encourage a more in-depth excursion into the consumer mindset and could be used adjacently in the campaign planning and development process. The proposition is to make an attempt at translating a campaign into a story, as an

insightful exercise, which would help the storyteller to build more robust characters, establish relationships and connections between them and ultimately create more powerful and unconsciously effective brand stories and messages. Interpreting and defining the positioning of a product or brand through a well-constructed story, ensures not only its easiness to grasp, but it also makes it believable.

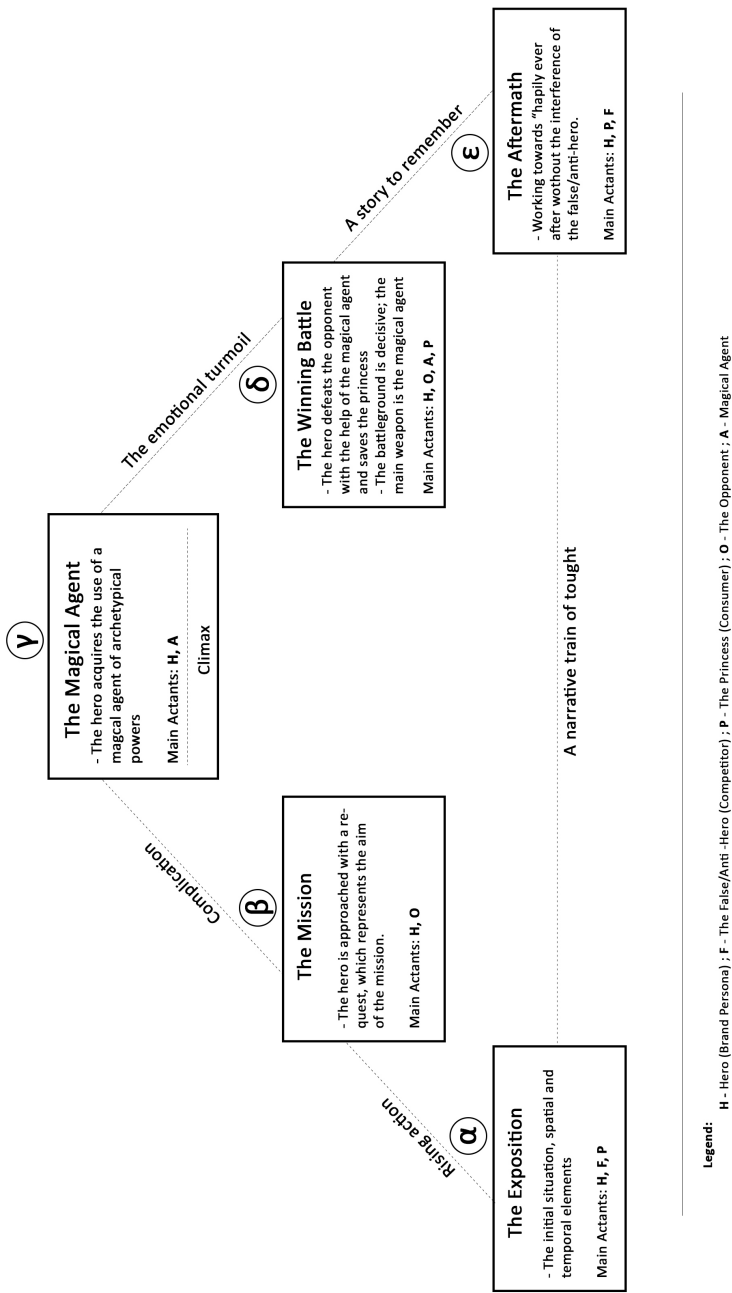


Figure 13 – The Campaign as a Tale

Following the storytelling paradigm of a classical fairy-tale, the story narrated below is the allegorical transposition of a trending Christmas campaign launched by an iconic British brand this season:

Once upon a time, in a land of abundance and a time of choice, there lived many kinds of creatures who were in a constant quest to please their King and win the affection of his beloved daughter, the Princess. Such was their desire to enter the inner circle and befriend the royal family that at times they fought ardent battles, duelled in speech and in sword, and other times they fought shrewdly, forming alliances to banish their rivals and be a step closer to their object of value, the Princess. She was the fairest of them all, and they all knew she loved to dance and sing, and roam her beautiful realm. But then came Christmastime, and there was one thing not all creatures knew, but one insightful hare. The hare knew that despite the lavishness, despite the festive feasts, the dresses and adornments she was bathed in, what the Princess really loved about Christmas was something else, something simple, yet much more sincere. So the hare was faced with the challenge to show to the Princess that he understands her and he made it his mission to find that perfect gift for her. And off he went, he travelled far and looked so deep. After days of fruitless search, the hare stopped; and leaning hopelessly against an age-old tree, he felt he had failed his Princess. But then, in a sudden manner out of earthen ambit, the hare heard a crackling sound and felt one of the branches of the tree eerily glaring at him. And then a voice. With great sagacity the magus inside has spelt, of such truth that cannot be pierced with the eye, and he told the hare that there was much more to the story of the Princess, that there was someone she wanted to give a Christmas they shall never forget. The hare thanked the wise old tree and went back to find them. He found it was a creature the Princess could not share her Christmas with; the creature was bound by nature to miss the joyous festivities and be away that time. But in light of his new wisdom, the hare found the magic of the magus within him and

with a gift he carved from the wise old tree, the hare broke the spell and on Christmas Day at morrow he brought the creature to the Princess. In bliss she danced and swirled for days on end and she rewarded the hare for his dedication by offering him the greatest gift of all, her friendship. And he became her most loyal companion, and their story resonated in the entire land. Two old friends the Princess and the hare became, and turning every day in a new adventure, they lived happily ever after.

The model introduces five actants, or *dramatis personae*, whose characteristics have been adapted from Propp's (1928) *Morphology of the Folktale*:

- **H - The Hero** - the superego, that of simple birth, yet great destiny, the human representation of the brand – ***The Brand Persona***.
- **F - The False/Anti-Hero** - ***The Competition***.
- **P - The Princess** - the supreme character; the object of value, the one for which the battle is fought – ***The Consumer***.
- **O - The Opponent** - any factor that may disturb the scene, any problems that need addressing, a villain which needs to be removed – ***The Opposing Factors***.
- **A - The Magical Agent** – a wondrous element, be it a magic weapon or the facilitative bearer of a magical property; this actant has archetypal powers, which resonate with the consumers' unconscious; often – ***The Product***.

Based on Freytag's (1863) pyramid, the model consists of five acts:

- **The Exposition α** – the exposition represents the initial situation or context analysis, which sets the spatial and temporal elements and defines the market; during this scene three characters are introduced and discussed – the brand, the competition and target audience, or consumer. In the story told above, the narrator speaks of a land where consumers are jammed between

many brands and choices. They all know something about their consumers and they are all trying to create a long-lasting relationship with them based on loyalty and trust. At Christmastime this desire is elevated, and whilst they are all trying to find the perfect way to reach their consumers, one brand stands out.

- **The Mission β** – this scene introduces the task and the challenge, what the hero is trying to achieve and what the objectives are. Another character is introduced here, i.e. the opponent or opposing factors, representing those factors which prompted the campaign and need to be addressed. These two scenes represent the rising action of the campaign, an increase in tension. In our story, the opposing factor is the fact that the consumer does not find complete happiness at Christmas, despite the greatest parties, foods and decorations. Therefore, the main aim of the campaign is for the brand to show to the consumer that they are the only ones who understand the way they feel, and the objective is to find the perfect gift, or the perfect way of proving that.
- **The Magical Agent γ** – during this scene, the hero acquires the use of a magical agent, void of which the mission cannot be accomplished. This is the quintessence and climax of the campaign, building suspense through anticipation. During this scene, the hero discovers the critical insight or the critical attribute of their product that creates a connection with the consumer at an archetypal level. In this example, the wise old man embodies the magical agent, an archetypal symbol for meaning and wisdom, who shows a simple truth – that Christmas is all about giving and often the consumer needs help in finding the perfect gift for someone special in their lives. As Jung said, “there are as many archetypes as there are situations in life” (Jung, 1959, p.99)

and mythology is a bottomless source of wisdom, therefore the challenge for marketers is to identify the best way to position their product so that it cuts through and seamlessly reach the consumer. See Appendix 6 for a list of potential archetypes.

- **The Winning Battle δ** – the hero and the opponent face in direct battle with a view to save the princess. The main weapon is the magical element, which helps the hero to fulfill the mission. Inbetween the third and the fourth act, emotional turmoil is induced by the psychological connection that is made with the magical agent on the battlefield and the tactics employed to win the battle. In the story narrated above, the brand uses a gift, or a product from its line which, metaphorically speaking, has magical properties and manages to break the spell and defeat the opposing factors that hinder the happiness of the consumer.
- **The Aftermath ϵ** – this represents the successful marriage between the hero and the princess following the winning battle and the brand persona is given a new appearance, that of a winner. Between the fourth and the fifth act, the challenge is to spread the message in the entire land, essentially to transpose the story across media, to create a story within a story, one that will be resonate. The aftermath is a never-ending phase, during which the hero needs to work towards a 'happily ever after' and defeat any opposing factors that might come along the way without the interference of any potential false hero. *The story never ends.*

The brand personified in the story narrated above, has been trying to create powerful stories and tap into the consumer mindset through their Christmas

campaigns for several years. At an archetypal level, the brand has positioned itself as the *wise old man*, seeking to share his experience and wisdom and guide the hero through his quest. As explained by Wertime (2002), the wise man and the hero have an intertwined relationship, which in a very basic way “reflects the essential human experience that children have learning from their parents, grandparents and other elders who mentor and assist them as they grow” (p.160). Trying to show to the consumers that they ‘get’ Christmas, in 2013, the brand chose to tell their story by enacting a tale of friendship between a plucky hare and a bear in a movie-like commercial and a ballad that can now be heard far and wide (see Figure 14). Nevertheless, according to Mortimer (2013), “the tale within the John Lewis ad is not the most interesting one for marketers to absorb. It’s the story that the brand has woven around the tale of the bear and the hare” (p.3). The spot was heralded with teasers on social media platforms, and then it was launched in a movie-like premiere fashion, projected onto London’s South Bank and on TV, taking over one of the most important ad breaks on a popular Saturday night, being perceived not as an interruption, but as an intriguing and desirable piece of content. Furthermore, the brand has invited the consumers to experience their version of Christmas in-store, bringing the characters to life and recreating the animated environment. The sophisticated story narrated by John Lewis has made an attempt at establishing a deep emotional connection with the audience, and through an impeccable transmedia execution and integration strategy managed to go viral and take over the present media environment.



Figure 14 – John Lewis Christmas ad, 2013; www.marketingweek.co.uk

7. CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this research was to identify the key elements that help to create and nourish the relationship between a brand and the consumer, and explored how storytelling techniques can become an integral part of the campaign planning and development process in order to improve overall efficiency. The three main objectives of the study were to delineate the relationship between classical narratology and brand storytelling, to understand the construction of selected modern myths and symbols that are the result of sustained cultural interpretation and thus embedded in society and to identify and nominate core elements that lead to the formation of effective brand narratives. With a view to achieve these, several areas have been investigated, from semiotics to mythology and narratology, the fusion between them being believed to lie at the core of modern truths and paradigms that dictate the consumers' needs and choices. The study of the literature confirmed the effectiveness of storytelling in marketing communications, from both the narrative and mythological perspective and served as a backbone for

this research. Whilst the study of the literature helped achieve the first objective partially, three research questions emerged which needed to be explored further in order to achieve the other two and the aim altogether, i.e. what are the current approaches in the development of integrated marketing communications campaigns employed by students in the field; what is the nature and extent of storytelling in marketing communications; how do consumers interact with the storytelling element and how does advertising contribute to myth generation and preservation in modern society.

Firstly, the study confirmed that students base their approach of creating marketing communications on research and creativity, and they believe that brand differentiation stems from the two. Storytelling was deemed a very effective communication tool, and examples have been discussed as to how this was implemented in different campaigns and how it helped create a more powerful message and a story that the audience could relate to. The third research question was mostly answered through the online questionnaire, which revealed that people interact with stories differently, most still have a favourite childhood fairy-tale, which they can relate to, some of the participants going into detail to describe them. The study also suggested that the structure of the tales is one of the main reasons behind their fairy tale selection, followed closely by the construction of the characters and the life lessons or morals taught. In order to answer the second part of the questions, five different brands were looked at and discussed in relation to the myths and archetypical connotations attributed to the brand and communicated over the years through their advertising messages. Four of the five were confirmed, the researcher concluding that the fifth one needed to be looked into further.

Based on all of the aforementioned findings, an attempt was made to conceptualise a new framework that would add a narrative train of thought to the campaign planning and development process and reposition storytelling as a key element of this process. The model proposed, The Campaign as a Tale, was designed as a creative exercise of transposing a marketing communications campaign in a fairy-tale like narrative, thus stimulating creativity not only at the originality level, but also in terms of flexibility, synthesis, artistic value and complexity through details and elaboration, i.e. the five aforementioned levels of creativity identified by Werner (2013). Ultimately it is believed that 'The Campaign as a Tale' framework would complement existing theories and models, and would encourage students to take on a lateral approach in the planning and development of campaigns and integrated messages. In this creative exercise, students would be required to pay attention to detail, build a successful plot and robust characters as impersonators and also to explore how to tap into the consumer mindset through various archetypes, which were proven to be key elements that help to establish a connection between a brand and its consumers. Overall, the study acknowledges the persuasive effect of storytelling in advertising, from both the narrative and mythological perspective and furthermore complements prior research by taking storytelling to the next level and reposition it from being just a tool to becoming a more integral element of the campaign planning and development process.

8. LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In terms of the limitations of the current study it could be argued that the convenience sample for the focus groups might only represent beliefs and approaches specific to the institution they pertain to, i.e. the University of Bedfordshire. Nevertheless, due to resources and time limitations, the study could not be carried at a larger scale. Therefore, it would be interesting to conduct a

similar, but more comprehensive study, and to examine whether the findings would be consistent and whether they would apply in a broader context. Furthermore, the study is based in an academic environment; nevertheless it has the potential to reach out to an agency level. Another area for further research could be to explore the development of brand narratives in time and how these are affected by the changing of agencies that are producing campaigns and executions for the client or brand.

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APPENDIX 1

THE FUNCTIONS OF DRAMATIS PERSONAE, V. PROPP (1928)

- an adaptation -

Initial situation α

- I. **Absentation β** – one of the members of a family absents himself from home;
 - *The person absenting himself can be a member of the older generation β^1*
 - *An intensified form of absentation is represented by the death of parents β^2*
 - *Sometimes members of the younger generation absent themselves β^3*
- II. **Interdiction γ** – an interdiction is addressed to the hero;
 - *Interdiction/request/advice not to do something γ^1 ;*
 - *An inverted form of interdiction is represented by an order or a suggestion γ^2*
- III. **Violation δ** – the interdiction is violated; a villain enters the scene; sudden arrival of calamity;
- IV. **Reconnaissance ϵ** – the villain makes an attempt at reconnaissance
 - *The reconnaissance has the aim of finding out the location of children, or sometimes of precious objects, etc. ϵ^1 ;*
 - *An inverted form of reconnaissance is evidenced when the intended victim questions the villain ϵ^2 ;*
 - *In separate instances one encounters forms of reconnaissance by means of other personages ϵ^3 ;*
- V. **Delivery ζ** – the villain receives information about the victim;
 - *The villain directly receives an answer to his question ζ^1 ;*
 - *An inverted or other form of information-gathering evokes a corresponding answer ζ^2 - ζ^3 ;*
- VI. **Trickery η** – the villain attempts to deceive his victim in order to take possession of him or of his belongings; the villain is in disguise;
 - *The villain uses persuasion η^1 ;*
 - *The villain proceeds to act by the direct application of magical means η^2 ;*
 - *The villain employs other means of deception or coercion η^3 ;*
- VII. **Complicity θ** – the victim submits to deception and thereby unwittingly helps his enemy;
 - *The hero agrees to all of the villain's persuasions θ^1 ;*
 - *The hero mechanically reacts to the employment of magical or other means θ^2 ;*

- VIII. ²**Villainy A** – the villain causes harm or injury to a member of a family; the complication is created;
- *Villain abducts a person A¹;*
 - *Villain seizes or takes away a magical agent A²;*
 - *The villain pillages or spoils the crops A³;*
 - *The villain seizes the daylight A⁴;*
 - *The villain plunders in other forms A⁵;*
 - *The villain causes bodily injury A⁶;*
 - *The villain causes a sudden disappearance A⁷;*
 - *The villain demands or entices his victim A⁸;*
 - *The villain expels someone A⁹;*
 - *The villain orders someone to be thrown into the sea A¹⁰;*
 - *The villain casts a spell upon someone or something A¹¹;*
 - *The villain effects a substitution A¹²;*
 - *The villain orders a murder to be committed A¹³;*
 - *The villain commits murder A¹⁴;*
 - *The villain imprisons or detains someone A¹⁵;*
 - *The villain threatens forced matrimony A¹⁶;*
 - *The villain makes a threat of cannibalism A¹⁷;*
 - *The villain torments at night A¹⁸;*
 - *The villain declares war A¹⁹;*
- VIIIa **Lack a** – One member of a family either lacks something or desires to have something;
- *Lack of a bride a¹;*
 - *A magical agent is needed a²;*
 - *Wondrous objects are lacking (without magical power) a¹;*
 - *A specific form a⁴;*
 - *Rationalized forms, e.g. money a⁵;*
 - *Various other forms a⁶;*
- IX. **Mediation B** – misfortune or lack is made known; the hero is approached with a request or command; he is allowed to go or he is dispatched (this function brings the hero into the tale); the hero can be a *seeker* (B¹-B⁴) or a *victimized hero* (B⁵-B⁷);
- *A call for help is given, with the resultant dispatch of the hero B¹;*
 - *The hero is dispatched directly B²;*
 - *The hero is allowed to depart from home B³;*
 - *Misfortune is announced B⁴;*
 - *The banished hero is transported away from home B⁵;*
 - *The hero condemned to death is secretly freed B⁶;*
 - *A lament is sung B⁷;*
- X. **Beginning counteraction C** – the seeker agrees to or decides upon counteraction;
- XI. **Departure é** - the hero leaves home; **ABC é** elements represent **complication**; a *donor* might enter the scene;
- XII. **The first function of the donor D** - the hero is tested, interrogated, attacked etc., which prepares the way for his receiving either a magical agent or helper;

² List confined by the selected material chosen for this research (Propp, 1928)

- *The donor tests the hero D^1 ;*
 - *The donor greets and interrogates the hero D^2 ;*
 - *A dying or deceased person requests the rendering of a service D^3 ;*
 - *A prisoner begs for his freedom D^4 ;*
 - *The hero is approached with a request for mercy D^5 ;*
 - *Disputants request a division of property D^6 ;*
 - *Other requests D^7 ;*
 - *A hostile creature attempts to destroy the hero D^8 ;*
 - *A hostile creature engages the hero in combat D^9 ;*
 - *The hero is shown a magical agent which is offered for exchange D^{10} ;*
- XIII. **The hero's reaction E** – the hero reacts to the actions of the future donor;
- *The hero withstands (or does not withstand) a test E^1 ;*
 - *The hero answers (or does not answer) a greeting E^2 ;*
 - *He renders (or does not render) a service to a dead person E^3 ;*
 - *He frees a captive E^4 ;*
 - *He shows mercy to a suppliant E^5 ;*
 - *He completes an apportionment and reconciles the disputants E^6 ;*
 - *The hero performs some other service E^7 ;*
 - *The hero saves himself from an attempt on his life by employing the same tactics used by his adversary E^8 ;*
 - *The hero vanquishes (or does not vanquish) his adversary E^9 ;*
 - *The hero agrees to an exchange, but immediately employs the magic power of the object exchanged against the barterer E^{10} ;*
- XIV. **Provision or receipt of a magical agent F** – the hero acquires the use of a magical agent; *animals (1), objects out of which magical helpers appear (2), objects possessing a magical property (3), qualities or capacities which are directly given (4);*
- *The agent is directly transferred F^1 ;*
 - *The agent is pointed out F^2 ;*
 - *The agent is prepared F^3 ;*
 - *The agent is sold and purchased F^4 ;*
 - *The agent falls into the hands of the hero by chance (is found by him) F^5 ;*
 - *The agent suddenly appears of its own accord F^6 ;*
 - *The agent is eaten or drunk F^7 ;*
 - *The agent is seized F^8 ;*
 - *Various characters place themselves at the disposal of the hero F^9 ;*
- XV. **Spatial transference between two kingdoms, guidance G** – the hero is transferred, delivered, or led to the whereabouts of an object of search; this function is sometimes absent;
- *The hero flies through the air G^1 ;*
 - *He travels on the ground or on water G^2 ;*
 - *He is led G^3 ;*
 - *The route is shown to him G^4 ;*
 - *He makes use of stationary means of communication G^5 ;*
 - *He follows bloody tracks G^6 ;*
- XVI. **Struggle H** – the hero and the villain join in direct combat;
- *They fight in an open field H^1 ;*

- *They engage in a competition H²;*
- *They play cards H³;*
- *Special form identified in tale no. 93 H⁴;*
- XVII. **Branding, marking J** – the hero is branded;
 - *A brand is applied to the body;*
 - *The hero receives a ring or a towel;*
- XVIII. **Victory I** – the villain is defeated;
 - *The villain is beaten in open combat I¹;*
 - *He is defeated in a contest I²;*
 - *He loses at cards I³;*
 - *He loses on being weighed I⁴;*
 - *He is killed without a preliminary fight I⁵;*
 - *He is banished directly I⁶;*
- XIX. **The initial misfortune or lack is liquidated K** – this function, together with villainy A, constitutes a pair. The narrative reaches its peak in this function.
 - *The object of a search is seized by the use of force or cleverness K¹;*
 - *The object of search is obtained by several personages at once, through a rapid interchange of their actions K²;*
 - *The object of search is obtained with the help of enticements K³;*
 - *The object of a quest is obtained as the direct result of preceding actions K⁴;*
 - *The object of search is obtained instantly through the se of a magical agent K⁵;*
 - *The use of a magical agent overcomes poverty K⁶;*
 - *The object of search is caught K⁷;*
 - *The spell on a person is broken K⁸;*
 - *A slain person is revived K⁹;*
 - *Reverse capture and revival K^{ix};*
 - *A captive is freed K¹⁰;*
- XX. **Return ê** – The hero returns;
- XXI. **Pursuit, chase Pr** – the hero is pursued;
 - *The pursuer flies after the hero Pr¹;*
 - *He demands the guilty person Pr²;*
 - *He pursues the hero, rapidly transforming himself into various animals, etc. Pr³;*
 - *Pursuers (dragons' wives, etc.) turn into alluring objects and place themselves in the path of the hero Pr⁴;*
 - *The pursuer tries to devour the hero Pr⁵;*
 - *The pursuer attempts to kill the hero Pr⁶;*
 - *He tries to gnaw through a tree in which the hero is taking refuge Pr⁷;*
- XXII. **Rescue Rs** – rescue of the hero from pursuit;
 - *He is carried away through the air Rs¹;*
 - *The hero flees, pacing obstacles in the path of his pursuer Rs²;*
 - *The hero, while in flight, changes into objects which make him unrecognizable Rs³;*
 - *The hero hides himself during his flight Rs⁴;*
 - *The hero is hidden by blacksmiths Rs⁵;*

- *The hero saves himself while in flight by means of rapid transformation into animals, stones, etc. Rs⁶;*
- *He avoids the temptations of transformed she-dragons Rs⁷;*
- *He does not allow himself to be devoured Rs⁸;*
- *He is saved from an attempt on his life Rs⁹;*
- *He jumps to another tree Rs¹⁰;*
- XXIII. **Unrecognized arrival o** – the hero, unrecognized, arrives home or in another country; arrival at *home* or at the court of a *king*;
- XXIV. **Unfounded claims L** – a false hero presents unfounded claims;
- XXV. **Difficult task M** – a difficult task is proposed to the hero;
- XXVI. **Solution N** – the task is resolved;
- XXVII. **Recognition Q** – the hero is recognized;
- XXVIII. **Exposure Ex** – the false hero or villain is exposed;
- XXIX. **Transfiguration T** – the hero is given a new appearance;
 - *A new appearance is directly effected by means of the magical action of a helper T¹;*
 - *The hero builds a marvelous palace T²;*
 - *The hero puts on new garments T³;*
 - *Rationalized and humorous forms T⁴;*
- XXX. **Punishment U** – the villain is punished;
- XXXI. **Wedding W** – the villain is married and ascends the throne;
 - *A bride and a kingdom are awarded at once, or the hero receives half of the kingdom at first, and the whole kingdom upon the death of the parents W^{*};*
 - *Sometimes the hero simply marries without obtaining a throne, since his bride is not a princess W^{*};*
 - *Sometimes, on the contrary, only accession to the throne is mentioned W^{*};*
 - *If a new act of villainy interrupts a tale shortly before a wedding, then the first move ends with a betrothal, or a promise of a marriage w¹;*
 - *In contrast to the preceding case, a married hero loses his wife; the marriage is resumed as the result of a quest (designation for a resumed marriage: w²);*
 - *The hero sometimes receives a monetary reward or some other form of compensation in place of the princess' hand w⁰.*

APPENDIX 2



The Campaign as a Tale

Welcome

It will take you just a few moments to complete this survey.

This survey is part of a study exploring the intersection between semiotics, mythology and narratology and placing these in the context of contemporary branding and consumer psychology. All results will only be stored as group results and analysed accordingly. If you would like any further information about the study, please contact Irina Bucsa at irina.bucsa@gmail.com.

Consent

1. I confirm that I agree to take part in this study and I understand that my participation is voluntary and anonymous and I can withdraw at any time.

☐ Yes

About you

2. Age

3. Gender

☐ Male

☐ Female

4. Nationality (*Optional*)

Select an answer

If you selected Other, please specify:

5. What is your favourite fairytale or folktale as a child? Please describe in a few words below.

What are the three main reasons why? *(select all that apply)*

- ☐ The storyline
- ☐ The narrative
- ☐ The main characters
- ☐ The dynamics between characters
- ☐ The intensity of the plot
- ☐ The simplicity of the plot
- ☐ The complexity of the plot
- ☐ The happy ending
- ☐ The moral or lessons taught
- ☐ The applicability in real life
- ☐ Other *(please specify)*:

6. Who is your favourite superhero?

Select an answer ▾

If you selected Other, please specify:

What is the main reason why?

7. If you had the chance to choose a super power for one day, what would it be and why?



Continue >

Survey testing only

Check Answers & Continue >



The Campaign as a Tale

Five Brands

What is the first word that comes to mind when you think about the following brands listed below?

8. Red Bull

9. Lynx/Axe

10. Harley Davidson

11. Nike

12. Coca-Cola

A few more questions

13. What are your three most favourite brands and why? Please describe in a few words.

Do you engage with these on social media?

☐ Yes, with all three ☐ No

☐ Other (*please specify*):

8. What is your favourite TV advert of all times and what is the main reason why?

Continue >

Survey testing only

Check Answers & Continue >



University of
Bedfordshire

Surveys

The Campaign as a Tale

Final Page

Thank you for completing the survey.

Should you have any further queries regarding this study, please contact Irina Bucsa at irina.bucsa@gmail.com

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APPENDIX 3

RESEARCH FOCUS GROUP – CONSENT FORM

The aim of the research is to reposition the art of storytelling as a core element in modern campaign development, e.g. character-building and narrative techniques. In order to do so, areas such as semiotics, mythology and narratology are discussed and placed in the context of contemporary branding and consumer psychology.

The aim of this study is to identify current approaches in the development of integrated marketing communications campaigns employed by students in the advertising and marketing communications field.

By signing this form you consent to take part in the study. The focus group discussions will be tape-recorded and the data will be transcribed. You will not be personally identified in any way. If at any time you wish to withdraw from the study, you may do so.

This section is your marcoms student profile.

1. Age:
2. Gender:
3. Nationality:
4. Name all brands included in your portfolio of creative work during this course:

5. What is your favourite TV commercial airing in 2012 in the UK/US?

6. What makes this effective in terms of communication? Please explain.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

If you have any further questions about this study, contact: irina.bucsa@beds.ac.uk

APPENDIX 4

Focus group 1 – 27.02.13 (9am)

R: Researcher

P: Participant

H: Helper

R: Hi, I'm Irina, Neville is not coming in today, Rob will be taking care of the second part of the session. I'm doing some research at the moment and I was wondering if you would like to take part in a focus group.. yes?

[Participants agree]

R: OK. The research I'm doing is on campaign development techniques in the marketing communications process and basically I'm trying to apply storytelling techniques to that but first I want to find out how you at the moment are developing and planning campaigns and what steps you take in order to do so. In order to do that, at the beginning I just want to do a little icebreaker with you. So if I was to say the name of 5 brands and then you would tell me the first word that comes to mind when I mention that brand, ok? Alex, can you write the responses, please?

H: OK

R: So the first brand is **Redbull**.

P: *Gives you wings*

R: OK

P: *Energy*

R: Energy

P: Sorry, I didn't...

R: The first word that comes to mind when I mention Redbull.

P: Oh, Redbull. [Erm...] *Energy*

R: Energy

P: *Wings*

R: OK

P: *Energy*

P: *Excited*

P: *Basketball*

R: OK

P: *Adventures*

R: Adventures, ok. Interesting ones... The next brand would be **Lynx**. Are you all familiar with Lynx?

P: Lynx? No.. The deodorant... *[some participants not aware]*

R: The men's deodorant.

P: Oh yeah..

P: *Fresh*

R: OK

P: *Fun*

P: *[undistinguishable, speaking Chinese]* I don't know a lot about the brand.

R: Maybe you've seen some TV commercials, anything on the Internet about the brand? Maybe it's called differently? It's called Axe in some other countries, I don't know about yours.

P: I think it's called the same, but Chinese never saw the advertisement.

R: Ok, that's fine.

H: If you don't know the brand...

R: If you don't know the brand that's ok. What about you?

P: *Ladies*

R: Ladies, was expecting that.

[general laughter amongst participants]

P: Erm... mine is *men*.

P: I don't know the brand, sorry.

R: OK

P: *Common*

R: Common, ok. He took the 'ladies' from you.

P: Yes *[general laughter amongst participants]*

R: What about, do you know, **Harley Davidson**? The motorcycles?

P: Erm... *bikers*.

R: Ok

P: *Men*

R: *[looking towards the group of Chinese students]* Are you familiar with this brand?

P: No.

R: Ok

H: Why don't you bring some pictures on the screen?

R: We could, hope this is working.
[undistinguishable]

R: Right, this is Harley Davidson, the motorcycles. So what's the first thing that comes to mind?

P: Erm.. *power*

R: Power

P: *Strength*

R: OK

P: *Leather*

R: Leather?

P: Erm.. *[undistinguishable]*

P: *Strong*

P: *Fast*

R: Ok

P: *Masculine*

R: Ok, this is an easy one. What about **Nike**?

P: *Sports*

P: *Dance*

P: *[undistinguishable]*

R: Sorry, what was that?

P: *Young*

R: Young

P: *Running*, don't know...

R: Running

P: *Sports*

P: *Adidas*

[general laughter amongst participants]

R: That's good.

P: *Performance*

R: Performance

R: And I've got a last one and I hope you know this one as well. Do you know **Mr Clean**, the character?

[some participants not aware, researcher put it up on the screen]

R: Mr Muscle or Mr Clean. Ok, so first word.

P: *Chemicals*

P: *Muscles*

P: *Clean*

R: What was that, sorry?

P: Erm... *[speaking Chinese]*

H: Say it in Chinese, it's fine.

[general laughter amongst participants]

P: Erm.. is it a brand for wash?

R: Yes, yes for cleaning products.

P: *[speaking Chinese]*

[door opens, student enters the room, researcher explains activity, ask helper to carry on writing down the answers]

P: *Chemicals*

P: *Efficiency*

P: *Old*

P: *Kitchen*

R: We're just asking for the first word that comes to mind when mentioning the brand Mr Clean. What's the first word that comes to mind?

P: *Clean*

P: Mine would be ... *thick*.

R: Ok, thank you for that. What I'm going to give you know, I'm going to give you some consent forms to sign for this group. Basically what we're going to be talking here will be recorded and then the data will be transcribed. I'm not going to be passing on the information; you're not going to be associated with names in any way. And if you do wish to withdraw from the study at anytime, let me know. So if you can fill these in, just make like a sign for yourself or write the name of a pet or something like that so that afterwards if you want too withdraw your data, just give it back to me. But anyway, this is more like an open

discussion, so it's not any sensitive data or anything like that, so we shouldn't have any problems.

[researcher hands out materials; general discussion whilst the participants take their time to fill in the questionnaires; McDonald's is mentioned and helper asks what you associated McDonalds with; some of the answers include coffee, death; discussion about brands and coursework last year]

R: Right, ok. Really I had two big questions which I wanted to discuss about today and obviously, you know if something comes up we will then mention those things as well. The first question would be how you approach the task of creating a marketing communications campaign, an IMC based on a brief which is provided to you by the tutor as part of your course? So how were you doing this before, I know Neville put this together for you now *[a creative brief framework, see attached]*, did you actually work on this?

[participants agree]

R: So how were you doing it before? So let's say you had a brief given to you and you were split in groups, or maybe it was individual. What sort of things were you looking at?

P: Researching the background of the brand, websites, articles online, what sort of people use the brand.

P: Using that information, we kind of.. Before we had this plan, we kind of... To be honest, we didn't really work much before this plan, I mean.. we kind of just looked at the research. I don't think when I've been here we've worked much on briefs.

R: What about second year? I know you had those portfolios.

P: Yes.. you kind of use the history and look at the question and then kind of, erm.. look at the target audience, and erm.. the type of... take that information..

R: Were you creating like a specific framework, even like at least in your mind so at the beginning let's say you were looking at the background

of the brand, and you were looking at the target audience, and let's say afterwards were you looking at the overall objectives of the campaign and then splitting that into goals and how you will be approaching, some tools? Or this just comes to you..

P: We didn't really, we had a brief but we didn't have set objectives and we weren't given like 'we want you to get this audience'. It was more like we need a new ad for this brand in the similar format as previous ads... I guess it was more looking at the creative side of it, rather than...

R: So you were coming up with the proposition as well and what you were trying to communicate through the campaign.

P: Yes...

R: So how do you come up with a creative idea? What's involved in that creative process?

P: For example, I was looking at other brands what they do and why it is effective.

P: Maybe like a mind-map, you write down all the words that you associate with the brand and maybe get more words and you may find a creative idea. *[undistinguishable]*

P: Same as the target, you draw a map of the target and you look at the brand and the target if there's a match.

R: Right, so I know probably Neville, or Rob, all your tutors are talking about differentiation. How do you think differentiation is achieved? How do you try to achieve differentiation when putting together a campaign?

P: It's all about looking at the key characteristics of what you want to show the brand to be, so highlighting sort of key areas you want your audience to associate with the brand.

P: Maybe also look at their previous campaigns or commercials that show their special characters or personalities and....

R: So you're trying to integrate it with the overall feel of the brand...

P: Yes...

P: Kind of like look at their brand beliefs, values, kind of simple really, looking in-depth into the brand, what it represents, kind of start with that and then kind of erm.. be consistent.. and then let the creative kick in.. what you stand for, and base it around that factor.

R: Ok, so basically you're trying to reach the consumer at both a psychological and emotional level through the campaign, isn't it?

[agree]

R: How do you think again this is achieved? What do you think makes a campaign reach someone at an emotional level, a basic emotional level or psychological, tap into their mind?

P: You have to have something that will relate to them, as there may be something that they enjoy or something they may aspire to, be, or having in their life. Erm.. it depends really on what your target audience is. I guess, Lynx would be a good example because you've got men and someone said they think of women, so that sort of like what they ideally would want from the brand.

P: Coke as well.. kind of link it back to younger days, grandparents etc. Gives a nostalgic feel, go back to the good old days, drinking Coke with your family, it represents that.

R: What about you guys there, would you have anything to add?

[silence]

R: So basically you agree with what they are saying?

[they agree]

R: Ok, are you aware of the term top-of-mind awareness?

[silence]

R: TOMA is basically when you refer to a brand or product that's coming first to mind, in a consumer's mind, when you think of a particular industry. So, let's say when we think about the drinks industry, we think about Coke, first think that comes to mind. Or when we think about men's deodorants, the first brand that comes to mind is Lynx. So through a marketing communications campaign that's what we're all trying to do, we're trying to reach the consumer's TOMA. So, again... how is that achieved?

P: Basically I think you have to be everywhere, if people can see you like when you go home, you can see the brand everywhere and once you mention the category and they will think about the brand.

R: So it has to be an integrated message, which goes out in a variety of media.

P: It has to be a broad audience as well, you wouldn't just set yourself one type of person, because then they're going to be the only people that buy it, so instead of basing it on interest maybe you should do it at a broader commercial level, like drinks... Carlsberg is football, majority of people watch football and they can relate to that, some way that Lynx is women, it's such a wide area to focus on and a lot more people will find it interesting.

P: Maybe it can be different for different markets because if it's for like drinks or clothes you have to be everywhere but if it's for a niche market, a really specific market, if you have good quality people will think you are the best, but for different markets have different techniques.

H: So you're talking about different groups having different ideas.

R: But again, with the same integrated message, like the overall feel of the brand will remain the same.

R: What I will try to do when Rob is coming back, maybe try to fill in one of these briefs. Would you have one of the briefs with you from the course?

P: I've got one that's already filled in, but not an empty one.

R: I've got the blank ones, but is that how it was given to you or did you break it down>

P: We had to fill it in.

R: Ok, was hoping to fill one in and have a discussion about each of these... Maybe we can do this when Rob is coming back. I think the last thing would be, you only take here about the proposition, which is basically, why this will be effective, a single proposition for your overall campaign and the tone of voice. But do you think it will be more effective if you had like a different framework which will allow you to put these things and talk about how the brand values will be communicated, how TOMA will be achieved, so basically when you're developing a campaign to have a specific framework that would help you achieve all these objectives.

H: More specific one.

R: More specific framework.

[participants agree]

R: How this will be communicated. So basically from here *[the attached framework]* we know the tone of voice and the proposition, but then, after this have a framework how this will be achieved and what tools we're going to be using. Do you think that would help in terms of developing, in planning the campaign?

P: I think it's good, I think yeah, I think the tools that you use, I think if you fill this in you will be able to kind of know what tools or what area of tools you should be using. It might be helpful. So what you're saying, what type of marketing tools?

R: Yeah

P: I'm trying to think where that will fit in or just make a new box?

H: What she's saying, the proposition box break it down in 10 different sort of sub-categories, you have tools, what vehicles you are going to use, how you're going to communicate the message.

P: Maybe looking at quite a few creative briefs, the proposition is quite small isn't it? Tells you the idea, I don't know if it will be a distraction.

P: I think on the creative brief the brand and the target have the most important critical insights that make a difference, but the proposition is more after the planning really. So yeah, I don't think it's as relevant.

H: Really? So if you plan a campaign for a brand, you think it's more important to know the brand and what else did you say, the target audience and what you're trying to achieve from it. So let's say you ace that, but then you have no strategy to go ahead with your campaign because it's not that relevant.

P: You develop it from the rest of it though.

H: But that's what she's saying, how do you develop it? So once you have the brand facts and everything, you ace it yes, how do you take that a step further, three steps further till it gets to everyone. What vehicles are you using, who are you partnering up with?

P: With vehicles it depends on your budget and things like that really, everyone could say I want to do a TV commercial and what sort of budget you've got is not possible.

P: I don't think you want too much information.

R: No, what I mean is... Let's not talk about these sheets specifically, you are given a creative brief on which you work on. And then based on a brief you develop your actual campaign.

H: So let's say you're in an office, you're marketing people now, a board of directors...

R: We've given you this brief filled in let's say or we're giving you a brief in a different format. How would you then approach, what steps will you take towards campaign development, campaign planning?

P: Oh, then you would need it. I thought you just meant on this.

R: This is just for academic purposes, but let's talk now. We're from an agency, we've given you a brief and you need to.

P: You'd need as much as possible, then in that case. *[other participant agrees]*

H: So what would go in, what would you talk about? You have a flipchart there, what points, what bullet points would you need?

P: What, to develop the idea from the brief?

H: Yes, to take it from an infant stage to a well-known campaign.

P: Erm... just market research, that would already been done in this stage.

[helper suggests to take of the creative brief framework from screen as it is distracting]

P: Media platforms, gateways, how you're going to transmit the message and then maybe how you link that back to your target audience.

H: Don't think too much, we're just trying to do, just create a framework, talk about a framework. Don't think about the budget, you've got as much money as you need.

R: We're trying to think about the message here, something again that would touch the consumer, the customer to an emotional and psychological level and how.. Do you consider these things when putting together a campaign, do you think so deeply?

P: I do, but I think I consider the key points that you're trying to get across and that's normally given to you by the brand itself. They want a certain person to buy into the brand, they're not at the moment.

R: So what we say is that through our campaign, in order for that customer to buy into the brand, we need to make this brand... make him feel nostalgic, like you were mentioning about Coke.

P: Yes, you'd need to give them something to aspire to.

H: Do you think it matters the way you communicate the message that you put together in order to achieve your goal?

P: Yes, because if you don't, it's not going to work.

P: Think how you communicate the message in different ways, obviously it would mean different things for different people, so you'd have to adapt that message into, depending who you're trying to target really. Like storytelling, it works with...

[other participants agree]

P: I think it's about knowing to market. The creative brief you know that, and all the research.. but then you have to understand it bit more. I think it's about using the true essence of the company, getting the right balance. Almost make the customers want to desire the brand or desire whatever attributes the brand has, but also enough for them to grab their attention. So the right balance.. The research will also tell you what kind of channels is best for that type of audience as well. So for instance, let's say like teenagers are not watching as much TV, may not be appropriate for your target audience to use TV commercials, but rather use social media.

R: So what do you think of storytelling in advertising?

P: Great, fantastic.

[general laughter among participants]

P: Well...

H: All the viral campaigns...

P: You can only do it if you're an established brand generally, you don't really see someone who only started two years ago saying this is what we've done. But then, they do it differently. Perhaps instead of basing storytelling on the brand, they base it around the customer, or the customers, which they're trying to get.

P: I think storytelling is a good tool, I think even if the brand is recent they can still use a form of storytelling, maybe not much on history because they haven't got that much history, but they can still have a form of story, I think it integrates a lot of things to keep the people integrated.

R: So what do you think makes storytelling effective as a tool?

P: The feel it gives you, remembering...

[other participant agrees]

P: Could be the history, the values, what it stands for, your experience.

P: Yes, they normally break it into like a timeline, points you sort of connect emotionally with things in the ads, which generally is what's effective.

H: The bakery down the road let's say, the coffee shop, they have a story too. They're saying we've actually opened up this shop because I was walking up the attic one day and I found an old recipe that my grandma used so bake, so we've just taken that and show how everything is fresh, taste the real English... so yes, that might as well work, but with big brands, such as JD, they're doing storytelling a lot lately, it works differently.

P: I think little brands can, like you say. I mean, I think every brand needs a story, so that people can associate it with. So, whatever that story is, could be quality based, or pricing... so... storytelling can be vast, a number of areas, which makes it effective.

R: I think really I got most of the questions I wanted to ask and some answers, so I think you can take a 5 minutes break and I'll call Rob in the meantime. Thank you very much for staying.

Focus group 2 – 27.02.13 (11am)

R: Researcher

P: Participants

R: Ok, so my name is Irina. I finished last year, and as Rob mentioned I'm studying a Masters by Research at university. My research is based on storytelling and using storytelling as a technique in the campaign development and planning process. So at the moment I'm just gathering some data on how campaigns are built at the moment by students in the marketing field and how we can improve this. But at the beginning I just want to start with an icebreaker and some word associations, so if I say a brand name, if you could tell me the first thing that comes to mind when you think of it. So for example if I think of Coke, the first thing that comes to mind is Christmas. So if I say **Redbull**, what's the first thing that comes to mind?

P: *F1*

R: F1

P: *Formula 1*

R: Formula 1, ok.

P: *Felix Baumgartner*

R: OK

P: *Wings*

R: OK

P: *Jagerbombs*

[general laughter amongst students]

R: Ok, what about you?

P: Me? Erm.. yeah, I can't think of anything else. She said *wings*, but I can't think of anything else.

R: Wings, yeah...

P: *Energy*

R: OK

P: Same, *energy*.

P: I would say *[undistinguishable]*

P: I would say *wings* again.

R: What about you?

P: Erm, I don't know, I thought *fizzy* when you said it like that...
[undistinguishable]

R: Fizzy wings?

P: Right, yeah.

P: Ok... What about **Lynx**?

R: Lynx? Oh right, yeah... *men*.

[general laughter amongst students]

P: **Smelly men**...

[general laughter amongst students]

R: What about you as a guy, what does it make you think?

P: Every advert always shows all the *women* trying to
[undistinguishable].

R: So women, ladies, yeah?

P: Yeah...

[general laughter amongst students]

R: What about you?

P: I was thinking of the *angel* one, the advert... and I remember the advert with the angels.

R: What about, let's say, **Harley Davidson**? The motorcycle brand?

P: *Leather*

P: *Leather*, yeah because you always see them in the *black leather*.

P: Yeah, *bikers, rockers, smelling of beer*.

R: No, nothing else?

P: I don't know much about that brand.

P: Neither do I.

R: What about **Nike**? This is a simple one.

P: *Sports* [answered by several students]

P: *Just do it*

P: *Training*

P: You'd have to say *exploitative*, they're the ones that got done for... And it is, I'm sorry, but once you've read it you just always think of little children getting paid 10p an hour for making very expensive sports gear.

[other students surprised]

R: And last one, **Mr Clean**? Do you all know Mr Clean? I'm sure you'll know it if I put it up.

P: Oh right... I know that one...

R: Maybe it's an old one, it's a character basically from TV commercials about cleaning products. I think maybe it's more visible in Easter European countries and things like that, but...

P: Yeah...

R: Ok... I told you I was going to give you some consent forms, it's a little questionnaire as well, so if you want to fill this in. All the data that you write is going to remain anonymous and I'm not going to pass it on to anyone. It's not sensitive data, but if you do wish to withdraw from the study at any point that's ok, you can let me know, you've got my email address as well. If you can fill this in please. It's just some basic questions.

[researcher hands out materials; general discussion whilst the participants take their time to fill in the questionnaires; student enters the room and is being briefed; song choices in adverts mentioned; other student enters the room and is being briefed]

R: Right guys, what I want to talk about today is basically... The previous workshop I did was a little bit more like general, but this time I really want to do it more focused. So I want to talk about character building in advertising and maybe I want to have a discussion about Old Spice? Are you all familiar with the Old Spice campaign, should I play it?

[some students agree, some don't]

R: And then I just want to talk about how the character is built and the characteristics you think makes it effective and increases the top of mind awareness of the brand, and just have a general discussion about that really, what your thoughts are. So let's have a look at it.

[researcher plays the video; general laughter amongst students]

R: I think you're all familiar with the character, isn't it? And this has been a very successful....

P: I've never seen this advert.

R: You've never seen it?

P: No, I've never seen this advert.

P: I've seen the other ones before...

[general chatter amongst students]

R: So which one have you seen?

P: It's a very old spice one...

P: I've never heard of Old Spice.

P: Yes, because it's an American brand, so it's like Lynx, in America...

[undistinguishable]

R: In marketing communications this campaign and this brand is mentioned a lot all the time, because of these commercials with the person and how it's associated and they've become very effective. I think, yeah there are more commercials, but as a character he is really known in the advertising and, I think you're all doing Public Relations, yeah most probably in the public relations field. They've created this character basically.

P: You said it's quite a lot mentioned in marketing communications, but that doesn't necessarily mean that it's known to the UK public, because Old Spice is an American brand. We were talking about that with Neville, weren't we, in the very first lessons, that sometimes marketers they talk to themselves without realising that actually the public might not know what they are talking about.

R: Sure, yeah...

P: Because they talk their special language. Not special language, but kind of about things they know and the insides.

R: Yes, I understand.

P: I think, maybe, I don't know what your research is, but not everyone will know a brand...

R: I was just giving this as an example because I know in the units that we were studying in the previous years this was mentioned a lot, so really I did assume little bit that everybody will be familiar with the brand. But can you think of another brand or TV commercial with a specific character in mind? UK based...

P: *[undistinuishable]* Ladbrooks they've got erm... I think he's an old footballer, he's a specific character.

P: Go Compare.

R: Somebody said earlier about Mr Muscle, he was really...

P: What about, what's his name they guy who does the Walkers?

P: *[undistinguishable]* I don't know if they do it anymore.

R: So what do you think makes these characters successful?

P: I think the Go Compare one is so irritating...

[other student agrees]

P: You can't miss it... The Simples one, Comparethemarket.com, is quite...

P: Oh, I love that.

P: I guess it's familiarity as well.

P: They could be famous just because they are in every single ad...

[undistinguishable]

R: So if we were to break it down, consistency is one key thing?

[student agrees]

R: Familiarity?

[student agrees]

P: It's likeability as well, if you like and they appeal to us.

R: Likeability?

[student agrees]

P: Erm, and also... L'Oreal normally uses very famous faces who are very well known and they are...

P: But these are characters not celebrities... it's different between characters and celebrities. Because celebrities they are famous because of who they are, they are not a case... I don't know who he is, but he's a character.

P: Yes... *[undistinguishable]*

P: That's what I mean, that's why I wouldn't call him a character, they're just using him because he's a celebrity, they're not making their own character, they're just using his face to sell crisps.

[other student laughs]

P: I was thinking of 118.

R: Yeah...

P: They're characters... they're not particularly likeable.

P: Is it like association as well, as soon as you see that person or hear it, you automatically think of a brand, because you just associate the two.

P: The John Lewis Christmas ads, they give you that family, homey feel... Christmas and presents and you can sort of associate yourself with them.

R: So, do you think that by building a character like this, or like having TV commercials based on these types of stories and characters, are they more successful and why? Would they be more effective?

P: I think it depends on the brand or the product or what they're trying to sell, what message they're trying to put out...

P: I was thinking of like, years ago, I don't think it happens so much now but you used to get like Tony the tiger used to sell Frosties, erm.. and the honey ones.. the sugarpuffs. You don't see that so more, but children still associate those characters with those cereals, even if they don't particularly use them in advertising anymore. So I think it's quite long-lived if they do create a character.

P: Nesquik uses something like that for kids with the...
[undistinguishable] I'm not sure what it's called, but yes with the...
[undistinguishable] on the packs. But yes, apart from Nesquik I don't know...

P: I think it works well for children. But then would I remember that 118 if it wasn't for those stupid men? Don't know...

P: Well, maybe that's why they present it as not very likeable, you know kind of remember them but you sort of like them.

P: That's why people dress up as them.

[other student laughs]

R: What campaigns have you been working as part of this course, as I know you need to develop campaigns for specific brands, like UGGs.

P: Oh yes, UGGs.

R: So how did you approach this task of developing that campaign, obviously you were doing that in groups, isn't it?

P: Yeah...

R: So once you were provided with the brief, how did you approach the task as a group? What things did you look at?

P: We approached it, we wanted to get completely away from celebrity because that was done and dusted and so we were looking at an idea, erm... that was strong enough to stand on its own and not need a character or a celebrity to fill. But we also did look at the storytelling,

because we wanted it to connect with what UGG originally was, erm... so we definitely moved away from characters.

P: I think we all looked into the history of the brand, kind of got an inspiration from there, rather than you know, going for the quick fix.. on the character.. because a character it's got you know, a shelf life, just like a celebrity, it might work for a year, it might work for 10 years, but because the generations are changing and the world is changing, not everything will work forever.

P: UGG had really backed themselves into a corner by doing a celebrity idea, because they had, over the 90s they had built it with female celebrities to the point where men absolutely hated UGG, didn't even like UGGs on women, just thought of it as being trashy. I think this is something can possibly happen with any character you know, or any kind of idea... So your character has got to have longevity. Or be very easily changed. Old Spice to me, because I'm a bit older, probably I can still remember the adverts when they had the bloke in the crashing waves and it was pathetic [laughing] and it was considered an old men's cheap fragrance. It doesn't have a good brand.

R: What about you guys?

P: We went for celebrity and erm... *[all group laughs]* extreme sports and stuff, associating one upcool celebrity that would promote each other.

P: See it as a role model for men.

P: Yeah, then they would associate the brand with something they would want, how Lynx does with the women. Get the women noticed and the men...

P: We did Tom Hardy isn't it? And we used it in different situations.

P: Yes, different settings and stuff like that. I think it was like a male celebrity, an American football player, that doesn't really appeal to the UK or Europe, so... we got Tom Hardy like a movie star, known worldwide and just got him for like the recognition.

P: Then we used social media with them, a social media campaign to get young people to talk about it, post pictures on Instagram as well to post pictures of them and products and stuff that they support.

P: We did use a character for ours, but we had like a series of competitions to find that character. We wanted him to represent, we wanted a normal character, not like a celebrity or anything like that, we wanted him to represent normal men that we were aiming at.

R: If we were to think about the campaign development process and planning itself, let's forget about characters and everything else. What are the main steps do you think in developing a campaign? A marketing communications or public relations campaign?

P: Research and then you create the brief.

R: And after the creative brief?

P: Finding the target audience.

P: I think you need to find what your problem is first before you start doing anything else because if you're not sure what your problem is you can't really solve it. And of course, target audience and what you want to achieve, objectives.

R: So how do you come up with that creative idea?

P: Erm, ours was really through research because if you get enough feedback, for instance we went on men's fashion forums and started threads and started to get real men talking about what they thought about UGG and what they thought was the problem and that was absolutely invaluable as to creating an idea. And that's where our idea came from that celebrity was done and dusted and it wasn't going to work, it had been done and they were fed up with it and they've had enough and they wanted another idea. So that's the only way it would come through, by actually talking to the people that would purchase.

P: I also think that, once you establish what your target audience is, you need to have a look at their buying behaviour as well, because there's no point of trying to sell nuts to someone who is allergic to nuts, because he or she would never buy them. You kind of, you need to know

very well who your target audience is, what is their buying power, can they spend certain amount of money, like your price range as well and who you are targeting. Because I know UGG want to target 18, kind of early 20s men in their early 20s, but they haven't got the money to buy UGGs.

P: Yes, and it was really kind of shortsighted because you're talking about narrowing your market down to a tiny percentage of early 20s men who can afford to buy a single pair of UGGs. It's just bizarre, I can't believe they want to target these men don't have, or the majority of them don't have the capacity to pay for the product. There's something wrong there. And also I think you have to have a look who the company is, who the leaders of that company are. Because UGG for example, the youngest person on their board of directors was 45-50 years old. How they communicate, what is their buying behaviour, what is their background? If it's someone in their 60s they probably won't use Twitter and they're not going to use social media to communicate, but they are trying to talk to someone who is using those communication channels and I think that is one of the difficult bits because you have to convince them that this is going to work, because those people can potentially be quite conservative and they think that yes, celebrities that's it, that's what's going to sell our brand.

R: What do you guys think? Anything to add? What about in terms of differentiation, all the times we are talking about creating a marketing communication campaign, we all the time want to be different than the other brands, then your competitors and everything else that is in the market. How do you think differentiation is achieved through a campaign? How do you ensure this is being done? Like with your UGGs campaign, you were using celebrity endorsement. How were you making that different than another brand who is using celebrity endorsement?

[moment of silence]

R: It's not a right or wrong answer...

P: Maybe people would recognise it. You could say that about Walkers with Gary and like... why is that different than the other one, people remember it more if it's a certain celebrity or maybe a storyline in the

advert. People would remember it more, it depends on the advert and everything surrounding it, I think.

P: Walkers used Gary because of the nice man image. Everybody thought Gary was a nice man in football and then do you remember at the end of the advert he's still the crisp. But they were using that differently... they were using what the media what already caught him, to kind of to make a difference. Which I think it's quite clever, because you're using a celebrity and making him not what he's supposed to be.

[other student agrees]

P: Yes, they built a character like that.

P: Walkers used Pamela Anderson I remember, that was easy though to sell it though, because they were portraying those very quiet villages in the countryside and you know, suddenly Pamela Anderson appears with her cleavage out and everything, causes a stir in the local pub and everybody wanted to get Walkers, but I think you need to be very careful with celebrities. For example in America I know, Sophia Vergara, she's the face of Pepsi, she's the face of Burger King, she's the face of another couple of brands and you know when you kind of have one person to advertise so many things, it gets kind of old and stuff... and you go, you know 'oh, what is it this time', you don't really remember it, it kind of becomes repetitive, so... you need to be careful with celebrities.

R: So what do you think in terms of brand storytelling because we've been talking about adverts, about stories that they create?

P: I think it's a really effective way of advertising and marketing something, it builds up sort of, not a connection, but it just engages you more, rather than just an ad which is on TV, you kind of follow it and you kind of want to know what's the ending to that story or you sort of pay more attention to the advert rather than just having it in the background. Like the John Lewis snowman advert, that was one of my favourite ones from last year and it's sort of like something nice to watch, rather than just an ad about a product or a brand, it's not really showing you the brand, you don't see the brand, you just watch the story and then John Lewis might pop up at the end and that you may use on the shopping bag or whatever they used as, but you pay more

attention to watching the story, it's not this brand flashing in your face, you're following something, like a journey from start to finish.

P: I think it just helps relate to like the customer, the target audience, all the Christmas ads for like Asda, during Christmas you get funny beer ads for guys and stuff. It just helps relate to the customer a bit more, rather than just a standard advert.

P: It's more subtle rather than 'in your face' advertising.

[interruption from outside person; general discussion amongst students whilst that is dealt with by the researcher]

R: I think you were talking about...

P: Yes, I was just saying it's effective...

R: So we're talking about reaching the customer at a deeper level, an emotional or psychological level?

P: Yeah, more like engaging, not so in your face.

R: So, do you go so deep in this when developing campaigns, do you think about these things, do you think of specific characteristics or traits?

P: I think it's a process, I don't think you initially go... 'I'm going to tell a story about this'. Alongside research and alongside finding out say, you're working for Morrisons and you realize mums shop more than dads or I don't know, something like that, you sort of relate more to what they want, what they want to see or do on day to day basis and it's a process, isn't it? You find it as you go along.

P: Yes, it is about the creative feeling. The John Lewis adverts create a good feeling near Christmas, or family so when we did our campaign it was very much trying to create an idea or a feeling of men towards UGG, but it was masculine, not feminine. It wasn't feminine, it was masculine so they could reclaim that idea for themselves, so that was a psychological connection between the idea and the customer or that specific customer.

P: I think it's just you need to have a think of what works for you really, what works for the brand and just not go too mental with it. I remember this Muller ad that Neville showed us. They had every single bit of character that you can think of, you know and it's just, I don't know, it didn't work for me personally.

P: I think it has to be authentic, because if it's not people would spot that. Something I particularly don't like, if you feel that you're being manipulated, John Lewis did that really well. Because they don't tip it to the scale thinking you're trying to make me feel good about Christmas. They do actually make you feel good about Christmas and I think that's really important.

P: I think it's really hard though, just from my point of view, to differentiate between other brands when you're in the same maybe sector or you sell the same things. Like I think at Christmas, I think it was Asda, Morrisons and someone else, they all brought out the same 'mum's getting ready for Christmas' ads and that sort of thing so I don't know how you would, I guess it's through discussion there's a risk of all being very similar if you're in the same area and especially if you've done market research in the same time, then you get similar results so I don't know, I wouldn't know how to answer how to make it completely different.

P: I think, M&S have the Dine in for, 2 for £10 campaign, they kind of make you want that food because they present you with the food and the chocolate and everything and when you go in the shop and when you buy them and they present you with that big cake in the advert and it's actually that big... but I don't know, at least they make me feel that I want that food, just maybe because I love food anyway. And then I think Waitrose started doing it, and Sainsbury's as well, brands who are associated with being more upmarket, food stores rather than Tesco's, rather than having a horse burger.

R: But if you were to think from a practitioner's perspective, not from a customer or consumer point of view, again how do you ensure all these things we talked about, differentiation, making it effective, tapping into the consumers' mindset... How do we ensure that is done in our campaign? Is that in the planning process? Perhaps we want to look at these and these things...

P: Yes, absolutely. You can't come up with an idea until you know all those things. So it has to be the research and the planning stage has to come before any real creativity takes part. You can be as creative as you like but if it doesn't reach the customer, if you don't know your customer it's pointless.

P: Yeah, absolutely...

R: So do you think this could be conceptualised or put like in a framework, let's say the creative brief you've been working on, do you think this was useful in terms of helping you understand the brief and what the client wants?

P: Yes, it's useful. There are definitely sections that erm... yeah, it's useful, there's just bits where you want to know more. It doesn't focus particularly on your segment and your... I just need a bit more clarification of who they were, what they were doing.

R: Because here you've got the proposition and the tone of voice, but what comes after that? So when your planning process really begin, do you think it can be like a framework that can be put together that would help you in the planning process? To look at objectives...

P: There can be a framework, but you'd need to be careful because if there is a framework, does that make everybody's... if there's a structure to it, then it won't be kind of like as original because there will be a structure to follow so, I don't know.

R: But also, shouldn't it be a logical process? We identify what our problem is and we identify who the target audience who we want to reach is, because the Douwe Egberts for example, they don't have to advertise to people in their 50s or over 50s because that's their main audience that buys the product, they want to reach the younger audience. So in this case, there's no point for them to go in that market, because they're already in that market and they identify the objectives, what we want to achieve with this. And with the research, going back, what the brand has been lacking and what the problems are for the brand, or the subproblems rather, because in Douwe Egberts for example that's your problem, you're not reaching the younger audience, why you're not reaching it, kind of like going more in-depth research and then when you finish this, give it to the creative people.

R: Does anyone have anything to add, any ideas?

P: These are ideas for a formula, ideas in general?

R: The research is on campaign development, campaign planning so this is what I'm trying to look at.

P: See, I'm finding that creative brief really mixes the two between research and creative, and I would prefer these to be separate.

R: Ok, that's a good point.

P: Because they are two very distinctive parts of your brain that you're using, when you're trying to do research you're being very logical, you're following it through. When you're being creative you kind of want to leave that all aside and just be creative. So to me, I think that would help. If that was two distinct stages, rather than one.

R: Ok, that's a good point. Do you guys agree, or do you have a different view?

P: I think that's right, because I think that's probably one of the main ways you'll differentiate and make it different or more authentic because if you bear your research in mind and mix the two in one go, in something like that, you are at risk of getting the same research as somebody else and then your creative might be swayed and it might be very similar to somebody else's so I do think they should be separated a bit more.

P: But also, with this creative briefing in particular, because I remember Neville talking about in his podcast and feedback, talking about the planners and the researchers and that's one department, and then you've got another department, they are two separate sides in an agency or in a company if they develop the campaigns themselves inhouse. So... you know, this particular one maybe Neville did it because we have to come up with the research and the idea ourselves rather than saying we are the planners, yeah... I quite agree with her, they have to be separated.

R: Ok, I think I got pretty much what I needed, really it was just about a discussion to find out your views and your ideas and afterwards we'll be putting it together and if you are interested I will let you know about the outcome of the research. I think Rob is going to come down, and he's going to finish the session with you. Thank you.

APPENDIX 5

Creative Brief

THE TASK (What are we trying to achieve / objectives?)

Brand: _____ Team: _____

(What factors have prompted the campaign?)

THE CHALLENGE

THE BRAND

The Beating Heart
(What makes the brand what it is?)

THE TARGET

Snapshot
(Who are we communicating with, what are they like, what distinguishes them, their attitudes, lifestyle and behaviour?)

THE CONNECTION

The Word on the Street
(What are people saying about the brand / competition?)

AHA!
(What critical insight will make all the difference?)

The Proposition
(What single proposal will connect with the target?)

Insight
(What relevant insights do we have into the thinking and behaviour of the target?)

The Tone of Voice
(What 'feel' will we aim to achieve?)

The Small Print (Limitations and legal)

Creative taster... (maybe think about...)

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APPENDIX 6

Table 1
Archetype, story gists and brand examples.
Reproduced in part from Woodside et al. (2012).

Archetype	Story gist	Brand examples
Ultimate strength	When an obstacle is there, it must be overcome, strength must be proven in use.	Timex – “It takes a licking and keeps ticking”
The siren	Power of attraction, linked with the possibility of destruction.	Allure by Chanel; Envy by Gucci
The hero	Fortitude, courage, and victory; a journey and transformation.	Michael Jordan and Nike shoes;
The anti-hero	Universal message of destruction and attraction of evil; the bad dude.	Heavy metal icons; Harley-Davidson
The creator	Creative inspiration and the potency of imagination; originality; authentic	Coca Cola-the real thing; Walt Disney; Kleenex
The change master	Transformation, self-improvement and self mastery	Gillette’s Mach 2 Razor; Porsche 911
The powerbroker	Authority, influence and domination – the world’s leading ...; the best ...; number one	CNN; Bill Gates; Microsoft
The wise old man	Experience, advice and heritage; staying the test of time	Levi’s; Obi-Wan Kenobi
The loyalist	Trust, loyalty and reassurance	Coca Cola and “Mean” Joe Green with boy of 12 TV commercial;
The mother of goodness	Purity, nourishment, and motherly warmth	Tropicana Orange Juice;
The little trickster	Humor, non-conformity, and the element of surprise	Dennis the menace; Bart Simpson;
The enigma	Mystery, surprise, and uncertainty	Zorro; Abercrombie and Fitch; Star Trek